THE
Protestants Plea
FOR A
SOCINIAN:

Justifying His Doctrine from being opposite to

SCRIPTURE
OR
CHURCH-AUTHORITY;

And Him from being Guilty of

HERESIE, or SCHISM.

In Five Conferences.

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THE

First Conference.

The *Socinian's* Proteſtant-Plea for his not holding any thing contrary to the *Holy Scriptures.*

1. *THat he believes all contained in the Scriptures to be God's Word; and therefore implicitly believes thoſe truths, againſt which he errs.* §. 2.
2. *That alſo he uſeth his beſt endeavor to find the true ſenſe of Scriptures: and, that more is not required of him from God for his Faith or Salvation, than doing his beſt endeavour for attaining it.* §. 3.
3. *That, as for an explicite Faith required of ſome points neceſſary, he is ſufficiently aſſured, that this point concerning the Son's Conſubſtantiality with the Father, as to the affirmative, is not ſo from the Proteſtant's affirming all neceſſaries to be clear in Scripture, even to the unlearned; which this, in the affirmative, is not to him.* §. 4.
4. *That ſeveral expreſs, and plain Scriptures do perſwade him, that the negative (if either) is neceſſary to be believed; and that from the clearneſs of Scriptures, he hath as much certainty in this point, as Proteſtants can have from them in ſome other, held againſt the common expreſſions of the former times of the Church.* §. 6, 8.
5. *That, for the right underſtanding of Scriptures, either he may be certain of a juſt induſtry uſed; or elſe, that Proteſtants, in aſſerting that the Scriptures are plain only to the induſtrious; and then, that none are certain, when they have uſed a juſt induſtry, thus muſt ſtill remain alſo uncertain in their Faith; as not knowing, whether ſome defect in this their induſtry cauſeth them not to miſtake the Scriptures.*
6. *Laſtly, That none have uſed more diligence in the ſearch of Scripture, than the* Socinians, *as appears by their Writings, addicting themſelves wholly to this Word of God, and not ſuffering themſelves to be any way byaſs'd by any other humane, either modern, or ancient Authority.* §. 9.

Digreſs. Where, *The* Proteſtant's, *and* Socinian's *pretended Certainty of the ſenſe of Scripture apprehended by them, and made the ground of their Faith againſt the ſenſe of the ſame Scripture declared by the major part of the Church is examined.* §. 9.

§. 1. TO ſhew the invalidity of ſuch a Guide as Proteſtants have framed to themſelves for preſerving the true Faith, and ſuppreſſing Hereſies, hath for ſeveral years been the Subject of divers Modern Pens: But, becauſe Inſtances and Examples, ſeem to ſome, more weighty and convincing, it is thought fit (the more to awaken, and the better to ſatisfie him) here to let the Reader ſee what Apology a *Socinian* (who tho' denying the Trinity, and our Saviors Deity, yet, moſt zealouſly urges Scripture, and its plainneſs in all neceſſaries, as if it juſtified his own Errors; or that he Erred only in matters not neceſſary) upon the Proteſtant Principles may return for himſelf to a Proteſtant endeavouring to reduce him to the true Faith and the *Nicene* Creed; and uſing any of theſe five Motives thereto, *viz.* The Teſtimony of 1. Scripture. 2. Catholic-Church-Authority. 3. Councils, with the Danger and Guilt of 4. Hereſie, and 5. Schiſm. Not intending hereby to equal all Proteſtant Opinions with the *Socinian*; but inferring that theſe Pleas as relating to theſe Motives will as rationally juſtifie the *Socinian* as the Proteſtant.

For, ſuppoſe a Proteſtant, firſt, concerning the *Scriptures*, queſtion a *Socinian* in this manner.

Prot. Why do you, to the great danger of your ſoul, and ſalvation, not believe, *God the Son to be of one, and the ſame eſſence, and ſubſtance with God the Father*, it being ſo principal an Article of the *Chriſtian* Faith, delivered in the *Holy Scriptures*?

Soc. To give you a ſatisfactory account of this matter. I do believe, with other Chriſtians, that the Scriptures are the Word of God; and, with other Proteſtants, that they are a perfect *Rule* of my faith.

§. 2. *Prot.* But, this ſecures you not, unleſs you believe according to this *Rule*; which in this point, you do not.

Soc. However I believe in this point; truly, or falſly; I am ſecure that my Faith is entire, as to all *neceſſary* points of Faith.

Prot. How ſo?

Soc.

Soc. Becauſe, as M. *Chillingworth* ſaith †—*He that believes all that is in the* Bible, *all that is in the* Scriptures (*as I do*) *believes all that is* neceſſary *there.* †p. 23, 159, 367.

Prot. This muſt needs be true: but mean while, if there be either ſome part of Scripture not known at all by you; or the true ſenſe of ſome part of that you know (for, *the Scripture*, as that Author notes †, *is not ſo much the words, as the ſenſe*) be miſtaken by you, how can you ſay, you believe all the Scriptures? For, when you ſay, you believe all the Scripture, you mean only this: that you believe, that, whatſoever is the *true ſenſe* thereof, that is *God's Word*; and moſt certainly true: which belief of yours doth very well conſiſt with your not believing, or alſo your believing the contrary to the *true ſenſe* thereof: and then you, not believing the true ſenſe of ſome part of it at leaſt, may alſo not believe the true ſenſe of ſomething *neceſſary* there; which is quite contrary to your concluſion here. †*Chill. p.* 87.

Soc. †———*I believe, that that ſenſe of them which God intendeth whatſoever it is, is certainly true; And thus I believe implicitely even thoſe very truths, againſt which I err.* Next: †——*I do my* beſt endeavour *to believe Scripture in the true ſenſe thereof.* [*By my beſt endeavour I mean* †, *ſuch a meaſure of induſtry, as humane prudence, and ordinary diſcretion* (*my abilities, and opportunities, my diſtractions, and hindrances, and all other things conſidered*) *ſhall adviſe me unto in a matter of ſuch conſequence.* Of *uſing* which *endeavour* alſo, I conceive, I may be ſufficiently certain: [for otherwiſe, I can have no certainty of any thing I believe from this compleat Rule of Scriptures; this due endeavor being the condition, which Proteſtants require, that I ſhall not be, as to all neceſſaries, deceived in the ſenſe of Scripture.] Now, being conſcious to my ſelf of ſuch a right endeavor uſed: †———*For me, to believe, further, this or that to be the true ſenſe of ſome Scriptures; or to believe the true ſenſe of them, and to avoid the falſe, is not neceſſary, either to my faith or ſalvation. For, if God would have had his meaning in theſe places certainly known, how could it ſtand with his wiſdom, to be ſo wanting to his own will and end, as to ſpeak obſcurely? Or how can it conſiſt with his juſtice to require of men to know certainly the meaning of thoſe words which he himſelf hath not revealed?* †———*For my error or ignorance in what is not plainly contained in Scripture, after my beſt endeavour uſed; to ſay that God will damn me for ſuch errors, who am a lover of him, and* §. 3. †*Chill. p.* 18. †*Chill. Ib.* †*Chill. p.* 19. † *Chillingw. p.* 102. †*Chill. p.* 18, 92.

lover

lover of truth, is to rob man of his comfort, and God of his goodneſs; is to make man deſperate, and God a Tyrant.

§. 4. *Prot.* But this defence will no way ſerve your turn for all points of Faith revealed in Scripture: for you ought to have of ſome points an *expreſs* and *explicite* Faith.

Soc. Of what points?

Prot. Of all thoſe that are *fundamental* and *neceſſary*.

Soc. Then if this point of *Conſubſtantiality of the Son with God the Father* be none of the *Fundamentals*, and neceſſaries, wherein I am to have a right and an explicite Faith, the account I have given you already, I hope, is ſatisfactory.

§. 5. But next: I am ſecure, that this point, which is the ſubject of our diſcourſe, at leaſt in the affirmative thereof, is no fun-

† *Chill. p.* 92. damental; for, according to the Proteſtant principles † —— *The Scripture is a Rule, as ſufficiently perfect, ſo ſufficiently intelligible in things neceſſary, to all that have underſtanding; whether learned, or unlearned. Neither is any thing neceſſary to be believed, but what is plainly revealed: for to ſay, that when a place of Scripture by reaſon of ambiguous terms lies indifferent between divers ſenſes, whereof one is true, and the other falſe, that God obligeth men under pain of damnation not to miſtake through error, and humane frailty, is to make God a Tyrant, and to ſay that he requires of us certainty to attain that end, for the attaining whereof we have no certain means. In fine,* † *where Scriptures are plain, as they are in neceſſa-*

† *Chill. p.* 59 *ries, they need no infallible Interpreter, no further explanation* [to me]; *and where they are not plain, there if I, uſing diligence to find the truth, do yet miſs of it, and fall into Error, there is no danger in it.*

Prot. True. Such neceſſary points are clear to the unlearned, uſing a due Induſtry, void of a contrary intereſt, *&c.*

Soc. And in ſuch induſtry I may be aſſured, I have not been deficient, having beſtowed much ſtudy on this matter, read the Controverſie on both ſides; compared Texts, *&c.* (as alſo appears in the diligent writings of others of my perſwaſion); and after all this, the ſenſe of Scripture alſo, which I embrace, (a ſenſe, you know, decried and perſecuted by moſt Chriſtians) is very contrary to all my ſecular relations, intereſt, and profit.

§. 6. Now, after all this ſearch I have uſed, I am ſo far ſatisfied, that this point, on the affirmative ſide, is not clear, and evident

evident in Scripture (and therefore no Fundamental) that I can produce moſt clear and evident places out of the Scriptures (if a man can be certain of any thing from the perſpicuity of its Expreſſions) that the contrary of it is ſo.

[See *Crellius* in the Preface to his Book *De uno Deo Patre*,—— *Hæc de uno Deo Patre ſententia* plurimis, *ac* clariſſimis *ſacrarum literarum teſtimoniis nititur*——Evidens *ſententiæ veritas, & rationum* firmiſſimarum *è ſacris literis ſponte ſubnaſcentium* multitudo, *ingenii noſtri tenuitatem ſublevat, &c.*—— *Argumenta, quæ ex ſacris literis deprompſimus, per ſe* plana *ſunt, ac* facilia *adeo quidem, ut eorum vim declinare aliâ ratione non poſſint adverſarii, quam ut à verborum ſimplicitate tum ipſi deflectant, tum nos abducere conentur.* And ſee the particular places of Scripture which they urge (where, as to the expreſſion, and other Texts being laid aſide, that ſeems to be ſaid, as it were *totidem verbis*, which the Socinians maintain). *Joh.* 14. 28. 17. 3. *Ep.* 1 *Cor.* 8. 6.——*Col.* 1. 15. *& Rev.* 3. 14. I ſet not down this to countenance their Cauſe, but to ſhew their Confidence.]

Prot. O ſtrange Preſumption! And is not your judgment, then, liable to miſtake in the true ſenſe of theſe Scriptures, becauſe you ſtrongly perſuade your ſelf, they are moſt evident on your ſide? §. 7.

Soc. 'Tis true, that I may *miſtake* in the ſenſe of *ſome* Scripture; but it follows not from hence, that I can be *certain* of the ſenſe of *no* Scriptures. To anſwer you in the words of Mr. *Chillingworth* †—— *Tho' I pretend not to certain means in interpreting all Scripture, particularly ſuch places as are obſcure and ambiguous; yet this methinks ſhould be no impediment, but that we may have certain means of not erring in, and about the ſenſe of thoſe places which are ſo plain and clear, that they need no Interpreters; and in ſuch this my Faith is contained. If you ask me, how I can be ſure, that I know the true meaning of theſe places? I ask you again; Can you be ſure you underſtand what I, or any man elſe ſaith; They that heard our Saviour and the Apoſtles Preach, can they have ſufficient aſſurance that they underſtood at any time what they would have them do? If not, to what end did they hear them? If they could, why may not I be as well aſſured, that I underſtand ſufficiently, what I conceive plain in their Writings?* Again; I pray tell me, whether do you certainly know the ſenſe of theſe Scriptures, for the evidence of which you ſeparated from the Church that was before *Luther*, † *Chillingw.* p. 111.

requiring

requiring conformity to the contrary Doctrines, as a condition of her Communion? *If you do, then give us leave to have the ſame means, and the ſame abilities to know other plain places, which you have to know theſe. For if all the Scripture be obſcure, how can you know the ſenſe of theſe places? If ſome places of it be plain,* † *Ib. p.* 112. *why ſhould I ſtay here?*——† *If you ask, ſeeing I may poſſibly err, how can I be aſſured I do not? I ask you again, ſeeing your eye-ſight may deceive you, how can you be ſure you ſee the Sun,* † *Ib. p.* 117. *when you do ſee it?* † *A Judge may poſſibly err in Judgment, can he therefore never have aſſurance that he hath judged rightly? a Traveller may poſſibly miſtake his way; muſt I therefore be doubtful whether I am in the right way from my Hall to my Chamber? Or can our* London *Carrier have no certainty in the middle of the day, when he is ſober, and in his wits, that he is in* † *Ib. p.* 112. *his way to* London?—*This I am certain of, that God will not require of me a certainly unerring belief, unleſs he had given me a certain means to avoid error, and if I uſe thoſe which I have, will never require of me, that I uſe that which I have not* †. ——This is Mr. *Chillingworth*'s ſolid Plea againſt the Papiſt's grand Objection, for the proving an uncertainty in the Proteſtant's Faith upon any their pretence of *evident* Scripture.

† *See alſo Chill. p.* 140, 366, 367. Sect. 8.

Prot. But the Scriptures, which you urge againſt *the Son's being the ſame one only God with God the Father,* carry not the ſame evidence and clearneſs, as thoſe Scriptures do, whereon Proteſtants build the certainty of their Faith againſt the Papiſts, or againſt the common Church-Doctrines that were before *Luther.*

Soc. That ſay the Papiſts of your plain Scriptures, which you of mine: I pray, what can be ſaid more plain, or in what point, in your Opinion, more fundamental (wherein we contend Scripture is moſt clear, even to the unlearned), than this, in *Joh.* 17. 3.—*Ut cognoſcant te* [Pater] *ſolum verum Deum; &, quem miſiſti, Jeſum Chriſtum*— And, 1 *Cor.* 8. 6. *Unus Deus, Pater; & unus Dominus, Jeſus.* And, *Eph.* 4. *ver.* 5. *Unus eſt Dominus,* [i. e. *Jeſus*;] and then, *ver.* 6. *Unus eſt Deus, & Pater omnium*— And, *Joh.* 14. 1. *Creditis in Deum, & in me credite*——And *v.* 28. *Pater meus major me eſt.* I ſay, what more clear for proving the Father his being the *true, moſt high* God, and excluding the other Perſons [the *Son*, or the *Holy Ghoſt*] from being the very ſame God?

Prot. An

Prot. And 1. what more clear, on the other side, than these Texts, *Rom.* 9. 5. *Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever*—— And, *Tit.* 2. 13. *The glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* And †—*we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life,* spoken by St. *John*, the great vindicator, against *Ebion, Cerinthus, Carpocrates* and other, in his time, opposers of our Lord's Divinity †——And *Apoc.* 1. 8. compared with 1. 17.——*I am* Alpha *and* Omega, *the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty?* I say, what more clear than these Texts, for shewing the *true Deity* of Christ? 2. And then, how many other clear Texts are there, asserting the *Eternity* of our Lord; that he is nothing made or created, but pre-existent before the constitution of the World; equal with God; and that Heaven, and Earth, and all things were made by him, that were made; and that he descended from Heaven from his Father, when he took our nature upon him? *See John.* 1. 1. &c.— 3. 13. *Heb* 1. 2, 3, 10 &c.—*Joh.* 17. 5, 24.— *Phil.* 2. 6.---*Joh.* 6. 38. —— 16. 28.—— 1. *Tim.* 3. 16.—*Heb.* 2. 14. And 3. then, his *Deity* and *Eternity* thus cleared, his Deity can be no other, than, in the total essence thereof, numerically the same with that of God the Father. For, those of your own Sect, together with the whole Christian world, do acknowledge, 1. That there is but one numerical most high God, an inseparable attribute of whom is his Creating of the world, and preexistence before it. And again; 2. That the substance or essence of this most high God, is not any way divisible, partible or multipliable; so that, *Si Christus ex Dei substantiâ generatus fuit, tota ei Patris substantia, eadem numero, communicata fuit.* See *Volkel. de vera Rel. l.* 5. *c.* 12. upon which consequence well discerned, your predecessors were constrained to desert Arianism, or semi-Arianism, and to take in other respects a more desperate way, of denying any pre-existence of our Lord before his Incarnation: To return then to our business. All Scripture being equally true; you know, no Text thereof can be pronounced clear in such a sense, which others, as clear contradict. The non-consideration of which by the passionate or unlearned, is the mother of all errors. The Texts therefore that you produce here so manifest on your side, that they may not contradict many more others as clear against you, are to be understood to speak of our Lord only according to his *Incarnation*, *Messias* and *Mediatorship*, in which he hath an

† 1 *Joh.* 5. 20

† *S. Hieron. de viris illust.*

inferiority to the Father and is our *Lord*, by a ſpecial Redemption with his blood, in another manner, than He together with his Father, in the ſame eſſence, is the one true God.

Soc. All the Texts you have mentioned have been diligently conſidered, and anſwered by our party.

Prot. And your Anſwers are new, forced, abſurd, as may clearly appear to any rational and indifferent perſon peruſing *Volkelius* l. 5. from the 10. to the 14. Chapter. But to omit this diſpute, as now beſide my purpoſe. If your ſenſe of the Scriptures, you have urged, be ſo manifeſt and clear, as you pretend; how comes ſo great a part of the Chriſtian world (doubtleſs rational men), in the ſenſe of theſe very Scriptures ſo much to differ from you? Therefore here I cannot but ſtill ſuppoſe in you the defect of a *due induſtry*, well comparing theſe Scriptures, and void of pride, paſſion, and other intereſt.

Soc. And I return the like queſtion to you. If, on the clearneſs of the expreſs ſenſe of theſe Scriptures, I cannot infallibly ground my faith, againſt many other rational men contradicting; on what plainneſs of the ſenſe of any other Scripture is it, that Proteſtants can ground theirs againſt a contrary ſenſe given by the learned; by ſeveral Councils; by the whole Church of ſome ages, as they do; not promiſing to the Councils, even to the four firſt, an abſolute, but conditional aſſent, *viz.* only ſo far, as their Decrees agree with theſe clear Scriptures? If neither the plain words of Scripture can afford a ſufficient certainty to me in this matter, which Scriptures, you ſay, in fundamentals are to all perſpicuous (and ſuch do many deem this point); nor I can have a ſufficient aſſurance of uſing an unbiaſt induſtry in the underſtanding of theſe Scriptures, and alſo in the comparing them with others, in which I am conſcious to my ſelf of no neglect, I ſee no ſufficient ground of my preſuming to underſtand any other part of Scripture; and then, wherein can lye the aſſurance of a Proteſtant's Faith, for his not erring in *Fundamentals* at leaſt? Biſhop *Lany* tells me, * *That when we have certain knowledge of a thing, we may ſafely learn from the Schools*, viz. *Ubi non eſt formido contrarii; that after diligent ſearch and inquiry when there remains no ſcruple, doubt, and fear of the contrary, when the underſtanding is fixt, we are ſaid to be certain—And that they who will ſay it, and do think ſo too, may ſafely be abſolved from the guilt of diſobedience.*

* *Serm. at Whitehall, March* 12. 1664. *p.* 17.

Prot.

Prot. † *You have a judgment of discretion I grant, and may Interpret Scripture for your self: without the use of which Judgment you cannot serve God with a reasonable service, who are also to give account of your self, and are to be saved by your own Faith, and do perish upon your own score.* ——† *None may usurp that royal prerogative of Heaven in prescribing infallibly in matters questioned, but leave all to judge according to the Pandects of the Divine Laws, because each Member of this Society is bound to take care of his Soul, and of all things that tend thereto*———* *In matters of Religion, when the question is, whether any man be a fit judge, and chooser for himself, we suppose men honest, and such as understand the difference between a moment and eternity. And then I suppose that all the necessary points in Religion are plain and easie, and consequently every man in this case to be a compleat Judge for himself, because it concerns himself to Judge aright, as much as eternal happiness is worth: and if through his own default he Judge amiss, he alone shall suffer for it.* To God's righteous Judgment therefore I must finally remit you. At your own peril be it. This, of the Socinian's Plea concerning the Scripture on his side.

†*Dr. Ferne Division of Churches, p.* 46. 61. *Chillinw. p.* 57. † *Stillingfl. p.* 1, 3. **Chillinw. p.* 59, 100.

§. 9. Where the self-clearness of the sense of Scriptures, not mistakable in Fundamentals, or necessaries, upon a due industry used (of which also rightly used, men may be sufficiently assured,) being made the ground, as you see, of the Protestants and Socinians Faith, before these two proceed to any further conference, give me leave to interpose a word between them, concerning this certainty so much spoken of, and presumed on.

§. 10. And here first, from this way, lately taken by many Protestants, there seems to be something necessarily consequent, which I suppose they will by no means allow; *viz.* That instead of the Roman Church her setting up some men, (the Church Governors,) as infallible in necessaries, here is set up by them every Christian, if he will, both infallible in all necessaries; and certain that he is so. For the Scripture they affirm most clear in all necessaries to all using a due industry, and of this due industry they also affirm, men may be certain, that they have used it; being not all, *possible*, endeavour, but such a measure thereof *as ordinary discretion*, &c. *adviseth to.* (See Mr. *Chillingworth*, p. 19.) And next, from this affirmed, that every one may be so certain in all Fundamentals, it must be maintained also, that their spiritual Guides, in a conjunction of them, nay more, every single Prelate, or Presbyter, if they

are not, yet may be, an infallible Guide to the people in all Points necessary. And therefore M. *Chillingworth* freely speaks to this purpose † ——*That these also may be both in Fundamentals, and also in some points unfundamental, both certain of the infallibility of their Rule, and that they do manifestly proceed according to it: and then, in what they are certain that they cannot be mistaken, they may* ((saith he‖) *lawfully decide the controversies about them, and without rashness propose their decrees, as* certain, divine *Revelations: and excommunicate or anathematize any man persisting in the contrary error.* And there seems reason in such *Anathema*; because all others either do or may know the truth of the same decrees by the same certain means, as these Governors do. Now then; what certainty the Guides of a particular Church may have, I hope may also those of the Church Catholick: and then, obedience being yielded to these by all their inferiors, this will restore all things to their right course. All this follows upon certainty, 1. That Scriptures are plain in Fundamentals; And 2. That due industry is used to understand them. But, if you should deny that men can have a *certainty* of their industry *rightly used*; then again, is all the fair security these men promise their followers of their not erring in necessaries quite vanished.

† p. 140.

‖ p. 118. 140. & 166.

But now, to pass from this consequence, (to which I know not what can be said), and to enquire a little after the true grounds of our certainty in any thing, which is here so much pretended.

1. It cannot be denyed, that he that doth err in one thing, may be certain, that he doth not err in some other; because he may have sufficient ground and means for his not erring in one thing, which he hath not in another. Nor again denied, that he, who possibly may err, yet in the same thing may be certain, that he doth not err, if not neglecting some means, which he knows will certainly keep him from error.

§. 11. 2. But notwithstanding these: This seems also necessary to be granted on the other side (and is so by learned Protestants,) That in what kind of knowledge soever it be (whether of our *Sense* or *Reason*, in whatever *Art* or *Science*) one can never *rightly* assure himself concerning his own knowledge, that he is certain of any thing for a *truth*, which all, or most others of the same or better abilities for their cognoscitive faculties, in all the same external means, or grounds of the knowledge thereof, do pronounce an *error*. Not, as if truth were not so, though all the World oppose it; nor had certain grounds to be proved so, though

though all the World ſhould deny them; but becauſe the true knowledge of it, and them, cannot poſſibly appear to one mans intellect, and, *omnibus paribus*, not to others. Now for any diſparity, as to defect, whether in the *inſtrument*, or in the *means* of knowledge, there, where all or moſt differ from me, it ſeems a ſtrange pride not to imagine this defect in my ſelf, rather than them; eſpecially, * whenas, all the grounds of my Science are communicated to them; and * whenas, for my own miſtakes, I cannot know exactly the extent of ſupernatural deluſions. I ſay, be this in what knowledge we pleaſe; in that of ſenſe, *ſeeing*, *hearing*, *numbring*, or in any of Mr. *Chillingworth's* former inſtances mentioned, §. 7. So, I can never rationally aſſure my ſelf of what I ſee, when men, as well or better ſighted, and all external circumſtances for any thing I know being the ſame, ſee no ſuch matter. And this is the Rule alſo propoſed by learned Proteſtants to keep every Fanatick from pleading certainty in his own conceit. See Arch-Biſhop *Laud* (§. 33. Conſid. 5. n. 1.)——and *Hooker* (Preface §.6.) their deſigning of a clear evidence, or demonſtrative argument, *viz. Such as propoſed to* any man, *and underſtood, the mind cannot chuſe but inwardly aſſent to it*; and therefore, ſurely, propoſed to many men, the mind of the moſt cannot diſſent from it.

Conſequently, in the Scripture; abſtracting from the inward operations of God's Holy Spirit, and any external infallible Guide, (which infallible Guide Scripture it ſelf cannot be to *two* men delivering a contrary ſenſe thereof:) I ſee not from whence any certainty can ariſe to particular perſons, for ſo many Texts or places thereof, concerning the ſenſe of which, the moſt, or the moſt learned, or their Superiors, to whom alſo all their motives or arguments are repreſented, do differ from them. From the plainneſs of the expreſſion or Grammatical conſtruction of the words, ſuch certainty cannot ariſe; unleſs no term thereof can poſſibly be diſtinguiſhed, or taken in a diverſe or unliteral ſenſe; but, if it cannot be ſo taken, then all Expoſitors muſt needs agree in one and the ſame ſenſe. For Example, For the *Literal* and *Grammatical* ſenſe, what Text Plainer than [*Hoc eſt corpus meum*]? and yet Proteſtants underſtand it otherwiſe. Very deficient therefore ſeemeth that anſwer of Mr. *Chillingworth's* to *F. Knot* ‖, urging, *That the firſt Reformers ought to have doubted, whether their opinions were certain, —Which is to ſay* (anſwers he), *that they ought to have doubted of the certainty of Scripture*; *which* in formal and expreſs terms, *contains many*

§. 124.

‖ *Chillingw.* P. 307.

of

of their opinions [whenas the greater world of Catholicks ſees no ſuch matter.] Beſides, as there is no term almoſt in any ſentence, but is capable of ſeveral acceptions; ſo, ſince no falſhood, no diſcord is in the Scriptures, there is no ſentence in it, however ſounding for the expreſſion, but muſt be reconciled in its ſenſe to all the reſt; and for this a diligent comparing of Texts is neceſſary, to attain the true meaning of many places, that ſeem at the firſt ſight moſt clear in what they ſay, but that there are alſo other places as clear that ſeem to ſay the contrary: And ſome ſuch places they were, (and that in very neceſſary points too) of which St. *Peter* ſaith; *That ſome wreſted them to their own* ‖2 *Pet.* 3. 16. *damnation* ‖: *wreſted them*, becauſe they wanted (not induſtry, but) learning; *which the unlearned* (ſaith he) *wreſt*——And indeed commonly the moſt ignorant have the ſtrongleſt-conceited certainty for what they apprehend or believe, becauſe they know feweſt reaſons againſt it; whilſt, by much ſtudy and comparing ſeveral Revelations one with another, thoſe come at laſt to doubt, or deny that ſenſe of ſome of them, which at the firſt they took for moſt certainly and evidently true. Pardon this long Parentheſis.

CONFERENCE II.

The Socinians Proteſtant-Plea, For his not holding any thing contrary to the unanimous ſenſe of the Catholick Church, ſo far as this can juſtly oblige.

1ſt. *THat an unanimous Conſent of the* whole *Catholick Church in all ages, ſuch as the Proteſtants require for the proving of a point of faith to be neceſſary, can never be ſhewed, concerning this point of* Conſubſtantiality. §. 14.

And that the conſent, to ſuch a doctrine of the major part *is no argument ſufficient, ſince the Proteſtants deny the like conſent valid for ſeveral other points* § 14.

2. *That ſuppoſing an unanimous conſent of the Church Catholick of all ages in this point, yet from hence a Chriſtian hath no ſecurity of the truth thereof according to Proteſtant Principles, if this point, (whether way ſoever held) be a non-neceſſary; for that in ſuch, it is ſaid the* whole *Church may err.* §. 15.

3. *That*

3. *That this Article's being in the affirmative, put in the Creed proves it not (as to the affirmative) a Neceſſary.* §. 16.
   1ſt. *Becauſe not originally in the Creed, but added by a Council; to which Creed if one Council may add, ſo may another of equal authority in any age, whatever reſtraint be made by a former Council.*
   2. *Becauſe ſeveral Articles of the latter Creeds are affirmed by Proteſtants not neceſſary to be believed, but upon a previous conviction, that they are divine revelation.* §. 16.
4. *Laſtly. That though the whole Church delivers for truth in any point, the contrary to that he holds, he is not obliged to reſign his judgment to her's, except conditionally, and with this reſervation, unleſs on the other ſide, there appear evidence to him in God's Word. Now, of the evidence of Scripture in this point on his ſide, that he hath no doubt.* §. 17.

2. NOw to reſume the *Conference*. The *Proteſtant*, better thinking on it, will not leave the Socinian thus at reſt in this plerophory of his own ſenſe of Scripture, but thus proceeds. §. 13.

Prot. Scriptures indeed are not ſo clear and perſpicuous to every one ‖ *as that Art and ſubtilty may not be uſed to pervert the Catholick doctrine, and to wreſt the plain places of Scripture which deliver it, ſo far from their proper meaning, that very few ordinary capacities may be able to clear themſelves of ſuch miſts as are caſt before their eyes, even* in the great Articles of the Chriſtian Faith. Therefore why do not you ſubmit your judgment, and aſſent to *the ſenſe of Scripture*, in this point *unanimouſly delivered by the conſent of the Catholick Church*; which alſo is believed always unerrable in any neceſſary point of faith, as this is? ‖ *Stillingfl.* p. 58, 59.

Soc. Firſt, If you can ſhew me *an unanimous conſent* of the Church Catholick of all ages in this point, and that as held neceſſary, I will willingly ſubmit to it. But this you can never do according to ſuch a proof thereof, as is required, *viz.* ‖ *That all Catholick Writers agree in the belief of it; and none of them oppoſe it: and agree alſo in the belief of the neceſſity of it to all Chriſtians. * That no later Writers and Fathers, in oppoſition of Hereticks, or heats of contention, judged then the Article ſo oppoſed to be more neceſſary than it was judged before the contention. * That all Writers, that give an account of the Faith of Chriſtians, deliver it; And deliver it not as neceſſary to be believed by ſuch as might be convinced that it is of divine Revelation, but with a neceſſity of its being explicitely believed* ‖ *Stillingfl.* p. 72.

by

‖ See before *Dis.* 3. §. 52. † *See Petavius in Epipha. Hær.* 69 ‖ *Apud Epipha. Hær.* 69 —*Theodor. l.* 1 *c.* 5. * *De Synod.*

by all ‖. Now, no such unanimous consent can be pretended for the forementioned *Consubstantiality*. For, (not to speak of the times next following the Council of *Nice*, nor yet of several expressions in the Ancients, *Justin Martyr*, *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Origen*, that seem to favour our opinion †: Nor, of those Eastern Bishops, which *Arrius*, in his Letter to *Eusebius Nicomed.* ‖ (numbers on his side,) *Hilarius* * relates no less than Eighty Bishops before that Council, to have disallowed the reception of the word ὁμοούσιος; and in the Council also Seventeen, (some of note) at first to have dissented from the rest.

§. 14.

Prot. Not yeilding what you say for truth; but for the present, supposing it; yet the Judgment of so *small* a *party* may by no means be adhered to by you, it being inconsiderable in respect of the *whole Body* of the Catholick Church declaring against you.

Soc. If the consent of the much major part is to be taken for the whole, then the Reformed cannot maintain their dissent from the much more numerous body of Christianity, that opposed their opinions, and sense of Scriptures at the beginning of the Reformation, and do still oppose them. But not to stand upon this, I would willingly conform to the unanimous, or most general judgment of the Church Catholick; if I were secure that she could not be mistaken in it. But † *The sense of the Church Catholick is no infallible rule of interpreting Scripture in all things which concern the Rule of Faith*---**Nor may she usurp that royal Prerogative of Heaven, in prescribing infallibly in matters questioned.*

† *Still. p.* 59. * *Stillingfl. p.* 133.

‖ *Stilling. p.* 154, 152.-- *Chillingw. p.* 150.—*Dr. Hammond Defence of the Lord Falkl. p.* 23.

Prot. You may be secure, that she never erreth in any point *necessary*.

Soc. But you tell me, that though she never err in necessaries, yet it follows not, that she is an *unerring Guide* or *Witness* therein ‖ or, *that she must unerringly declare what points are necessary and what not*; and I must first learn, whether this point of *Consubstantiality* is to be numbred among *necessaries*, before I can be assured, that the sense of the Church Catholick errs not therein.

§. 15.

‖ *Stillingfl. p.* 59.

Prot. But ‖ *It is a sufficient prescription against any thing which can be alledged out of Scripture, that it ought not to be looked on as the true meaning of Scripture, if it appear contrary to the sense of the Church Catholick from the beginning; and therefore such doctrines may well be judged destructive to the rule of Faith, which have been so unanimously condemned by the Church Catholick.*

Soc.

Soc. Why ſo?

Prot. ‖ *Becauſe nothing contrary to the neceſſary Articles of Faith can be held by the Catholick Church; for its very Being depends on its belief of neceſſaries to ſalvation.* ‖ *Stilling. ib.*

Soc. This laſt is moſt true; but then, if you mean to make your diſcourſe cohere, you muſt ſay, it is a ſufficient preſcription, *&c.* if it appear contrary to the ſenſe of the Catholick Church, *viz. in a point neceſſary*: for, the reaſon you give carries, and ſecures you no further; and then that which you ſay is no great matter: For, here we are ſtill to ſeek, whether the point we diſcourſe of is in the affirmative ſuch a *neceſſary*.

Prot. But this is ranked among thoſe points which the Church hath put in her Creeds. §. 16.

Soc. From the beginning this Article was not in the Creed; and though it ſhould be granted that all points neceſſary are contained in the Creeds, yet all in the Creeds are not thought points neceſſary: † *Neceſſary ſo, as to be believed by any before a clear conviction of the divine Revelation thereof*: which conviction I yet want. † *Stillingfl. p.* 70, 71.

Prot. But yet, though, firſt the Catholick Church may err in *non-neceſſaries*; And 2ly. in what points are *neceſſary*, what not, her judgment be not infallible, yet you have ſtill great reaſon to ſubmit your judgment to hers; becauſe, if it happen to be a point neceſſary, ſhe is from the divine Promiſe infallible and unerring in it; not ſo, you. 2. If not neceſſary, and ſo both ſhe and you therein liable to error, yet you much the more; and ſhe alſo in theſe things is appointed by God for your Teacher and Guide. §. 17.

Soc. Therefore I uſe the help and direction of my ſpiritual Guides; conſider their reaſons; do not raſhly depart from their judgment; but yet ‖ *The due ſubmiſſion of my aſſent, and belief to them is only to be conditional, with reſervation of evidence in God's Word. For in matter of Faith* (as Dr. *Ferne* ſaith) *I cannot ſubmit to any company of men by reſignation of my judgment and belief to receive for faith all that they ſhall define, for ſuch reſignation ſtands excluded by the condition of the authority which is not infallible; and by the condition of the matter, faith, of high concernment to our own ſouls, and to be accounted for by* our ſelves: *who therefore ſtand bound to make preſent, and diligent ſearch for that evidence and demonſtration from God's Word, upon which we may finally and ſecurely ſtay our belief*—And ‖ *The Church determining matter of faith* (ſaith he) *ought to manifeſt it out of* God's Word: *and we may expect ſuch* ‖ *Dr. Ferne Conſiderations, p.* 10. ‖ *The Caſe between the Churches,*

proof, before we yield abſolute aſſent of belief. And ſo Dr. *Stillingfleet* ſaith ‖ ——*All men ought to be left to judge according to the Pandects of the divine Laws, becauſe each member of this Society is bound to take care of his Soul, and of all things that tend thereto.* Now I for my part ſee no ſolid ground out of the Scripture for *Conſubſtantiality*, but rather for the contrary; which ſeveral of our Writers have made appear to the world. And therefore unleſs the Church were either infallible in all ſhe determined, or at leaſt in diſtinguiſhing thoſe neceſſaries wherein ſhe cannot err from the reſt, it ſeems no way juſtifiable, that ſhe puts this her definition into the Creed; ſhe, as I conceive, thus requiring from all an abſolure conſent thereto; and not only (as ſome ‖ would perſwade me) a conditional for ſome of them, *viz.* whenever I ſhall be clearly convinced, that ſuch point is of divine Revelation.

‖ *p.* 133.

‖ *Still. p.* 70.

CONFERENCE III.

His Plea, for his not holding any thing contrary to the Definitions of *lawful General Councils*, the juſt conditions thereof obſerved.

THat he conceives he owes no obedience to the Council of Nice.

1. *Becauſe this cannot be proved to have been a lawful General Council with ſo much certainty, as is neceſſary for the ground of his Faith, as appears by thoſe many queſtions mentioned by Mr.* Chillingworth, Stillingfleet, *and other Proteſtants, wherein he muſt firſt be ſatisfied, concerning it.*

2. *Becauſe, though it were a General Council, yet it might err even in neceſſaries, if it were not univerſally accepted; as he can ſhew it was not.*

3. *That, though yielded to be generally accepted, it might err ſtill in non-neceſſaries; and that Proteſtants cannot prove this point to be otherwiſe.*

4. *That the Leaders of this Council were plainly a party conteſting this, for many years before, with the other ſide condemned by them; and were Judges in their own cauſe.*

5. *All theſe exceptions cancelled, and Obedience granted due to this Council; yet, that ſo, there is due to it not that of* aſſent, *but only of* ſilence. §. 19.

6. *But*

6. *But yet not that of ſilence neither from him; conſidering his preſent perſwaſion, that indeed the affirmative in this point is an error* manifeſt *and* intolerable: *concerning which matter his party having long complained to their Superiors, and produced ſufficient evidence; yet theſe have proceeded to no redreſs of it.* §. 20.

7. *But yet that he will ſubmit to the Judgment of a future Council, if it, rightly conſidering the reaſons of his tenent, decree that which is according to God's Word, and he be convinced thereof,* §. 22.

3. *Prot.* But do you not conſider by what perſons this Article was long ago inſerted into the Creed: Namely, by the *firſt General*, and the moſt venerable Aſſembly of the *Fathers* of the Church that hath been convened ſince the *Apoſtles* times; celebrated under the *firſt Chriſtian* Emperor by a perfect Repreſentative of the Catholick Church; and by ſuch perſons, as came very much purified out of the newly-quenched fire of the greateſt perſecution that the Church hath ſuffered, that under *Diocleſian*; will not you then at leaſt ſubmit your judgment to the Decree of this great and holy Council; one and the firſt of thoſe four which St. *Gregory* ſaid he received with the ſame reverence, as the four Goſpels? §. 18.

Soc. No, And for this I ſhall give you in brief many reaſons, as I conceive ſatisfactory. For 1. Had I an obligation of ſubmiſſion of judgment to lawful General Councils, you cannot prove this ſuch a one, and thoſe the decrees thereof which are now extant, with ſuch a certainty as is neceſſary to build thereon an Article of my Faith. For to prove this, you muſt ſatisfie me in all thoſe things queſtioned concerning General Councils * by M. *Chillingworth*, p. 94. * By Dr. *Pierce* in his anſwer to Mr. *Creſſy*, p. 18. &c. * By Mr. *Whitby* from p.428. to p.433. [where he concludes: 1. *That we never had a General Council.* 2. *That a General Council is a thing impoſſible*] * By Mr. *Stillingfleet* p. 508. &c.——495. 119. 123. &c. Who alſo, againſt the being of ſuch a General Council as is the Repreſentative of the whole Church Catholick, thus diſputes ‖——*The repreſentation of a Church* (ſaith he) *by a General Council, is a thing not ſo evident, from whence it ſhould come: for if ſuch repreſentative of the whole Church there be, it muſt either be ſo by ſome formal act of the Church, or by a tacite conſent. It could not be by any formal act of the Church; for then there muſt be ſome ſuch act of the univerſal Church preceding the being of any General Council, by which they receive their Commiſſion to appear in behalf of the univerſal Church. Now that the* ‖ p.515,516

univerſal Church did ever agree in any ſuch act is utterly impoſſible to be demonſtrated, either that it could be, or that it was. But if it be ſaid, that ſuch a formal act is not neceſſary, but the tacite conſent of the whole Church is ſufficient for it; then ſuch a conſent of the Church muſt be made evident, by which they did devolve over the power of the whole Church to ſuch a Repreſentative. *And all theſe muſt conſent in that act whoſe power the Council pretends to have; of which no footſteps appear——The utmoſt then* (ſaith he) *that can be ſuppoſed in this caſe, is, that the parts of the Church may voluntarily conſent to accept of the decrees of ſuch a Council; and by that voluntary act, or by the ſupreme authority enjoyning it, ſuch decrees may become obligatory.* Thus he. But I ſuppoſe its Decrees obligatory then only to thoſe parts of the Church that voluntarily conſent to accept of them, as the *Arians* did not to receive the *Decrees* of *Nice*. Laſtly, by * Biſhop *Taylor* in the 2d. Part of his *Diſſwaſive*, *l.* 1. §. 1. p. 29. *&c.* to the end of the Section. Where p. 31. he ſaith concerning this of *Nice*, that makes for you, compared with that of *Ariminum*, which makes for us——*That if a Catholick producing the Nicene Council be rencountred by an Arian producing the Council of* Ariminum *which was far more numerous, here are* aquilis aquilæ & pila minantia pilis: *but who ſhall prevail? If a General Council be the rule and guide, they will both prevail, that is, neither. And it ought not to be ſaid by the Catholick; Yea, but our Council determined for the truth; but yours for error: For, the* Arian *will ſay ſo too. But, whether they do or no, yet it is plain that they may both ſay ſo: and if they do, then we do not find the truth out by the conduct and deciſion of a General Council; but we approve this General, becauſe upon other accounts we believe that what is there defined is true. And therefore S.* Auſtin's *way here is beſt,* Neque ego Nicænum Concilium, neque tu Ariminenſe:, *&c. both ſides pretend to General Councils: that which both equally pretend to, will help neither; therefore let us go to Scripture.* And *p.* 32.——*What is the reaſon* (ſaith he of Councils in General) *that ſome Councils are partly condemned: the Council of* Sardis, *that in* Trullo, *thoſe of* Frankford, Conſtance, *and* Baſil? *but that every man and every Church accepts the Councils as far as they pleaſe, and no further? The Greeks receive but ſeven General Councils, the Lutherans ſix, the Eutychians three, Neſtorians two,* &c.——Pro captu lectoris habent ſua fata. *It is as every one likes.* I ſpare to tell you what he ſaith, *p.* 26.—*That in the firſt General Council of* Jeruſalem, *which was the firſt precedent, and ought to be the true meaſure of the reſt, the Apoſtles were the Preſidents, and the Presbyters Aſſiſtants, but the Church* [viz. *the converted*

converted brethren and the Laity, see p. 36.] *was the Body of the Council, and were Parties in the Decree,* quoting *Acts* 15. 22, 23. *and that we can have no other warrant of an authentick Council than this.* 2. Though it be shewed a lawful General Council, representing the whole Church (as it ought, if such) yet what obligation can there lye upon me of consenting to it? since it may *err* even in *Fundamentals*, if it be not universally accepted, as indeed this Council was not, for several Bishops there were, that were dissenters in the Council, and many more afterward. ‖ 3. Were it universally accepted; yet unless you can shew me by some means, that this point wherein I differ from its judgment, is a fundamental or necessary point to salvation, both it, and the Catholick Church also that accepts it may err therein. 4. The judgment of this Council seems justly declinable also on this account. That whereas the *Guides* of the *Church*, many years before this Council were divided in their opinion, *Alexander* Patriarch of *Alexandria*, and *Hosius* a Favorite of the Emperor's heading one party; and *Arius* and the Bishops adhering to him, whom I mentioned formerly ‖, heading another, and whereas afterward, in the prosecution of this difference, both the foresaid *Alexander* in one *Provincial Council* held in *Egypt*, and *Hosius* sent thither by the Emperor in another, had there condemned *Arius*, and his Confederates; yet so it was ordered, that in this General Council assembled for an equal hearing and decision of this Controversie of these two professed Enemies to the other party, the one (*Hosius*) was appointed to sit as President of this Council; and the other (*Alexander*) held in it the next place to him; and poor *Arius* excluded; and the Bishops who favoured him in the Council, though at first freely declaring their dissent, yet at last over-awed to a subscription; as also was *Arius* himself chiefly by the Emperor *Constantine*'s overbearing authority; who, before somewhat indifferent in the contest, yet upon *Arius* his undutiful and too peremptory Letters, had some years before taken great offence at him; and also (as he was very eloquent) publickly written against him ‖. Which *overawing* hence appears, in that the same *Bishops* that were adherents to *Arius*, when, this Emperor being deceased, *Constantius* his Son countenanced their Cause, returned, I say not to their former Opinion only, but to their publick profession of it. By which we may guess, that if the Controversie had at that time been committed to equal and disengaged Judges, and such as had not formerly shewed themselves a Party; or,

‖ *See before*, §. 13.

‖ §. 13.

‖ *See Baronius.* A. D. 318, 319.

if

if the Oriental Bishops, without any fear of the Prince upon them, might have given free Votes; and the *Arian* Cause had then had a *Constantius* instead of a *Constantine*, (things wherein Protestants well understand me, because on the same Grounds they have rejected the Council of *Trent*) we may presume then the issue would have been under *Constantine* the same that it was under his Successor, I say before Judges equal and indifferent, and not such as were before a Party, though this Party should be compounded of the chief Superior Prelates of the Church.

‖ §. 478. For, as Dr. *Stillingfleet* urgeth, ‖ ——*We must either absolutely, and roundly assert, that it is impossible that the Superiors in the Church may be guilty of any error or corruption*; *or, that if they be, they must never be called to an account for it*; *or else, that it may be just, in some Cases, to except against them as Parties*: *And if in some Cases, then the Question comes to this, Whether the present* [he speaks of Idolatry, I of Consubstantiality] *be some of these Cases or no? And here if we make those Superiors Judges again, what we granted before comes to nothing.*

Prot. No Person that is appointed by our Lord to be a Judge in any Controversie (as those Bishops you have mentioned were in the Cause of *Arius*) can rightly or properly be said to be, on that Side for which he gives Sentence, a Party. Nor doth their giving Sentence once against any Side, prejudice them (as supposed Enemies, or Opposites, or Interessed) from sitting on the Bench, as oft as need requires, to pass it again, alone, or with others. But, if every one may be afterward called an Anti-party, who once declares himself of a contrary Judgment, I perceive Mr. *Chillingworth*'s Observation is right,

‖ *p.* 60. ‖ *That, in Controversies in Religion, it is in a manner impossible to be avoided, but the Judge must be a Party.* I add also, That in Matters of Religion, where every Man is concerned, and in great Controversies, especially where is any division of Communion, all, both *Laity* and *Clergy*, speedily own, and range themselves on one side or other; *Clergy* interessing themselves for the necessary direction of their *Subjects*; *Laity*, in obedience to their *Superiors*; neither can such a Judge be nominated, that is not to one side suspected. So that, in Controversies of Religion, we must deny any Judge (as he did ‖); or this Plea, That the ordinary Judge, that is assigned us, is a *Party*, must not be easily hearkned to. As for that you urge out of Bishop *Taylor*, concerning the *Laity* in the first Council at *Jerusalem* (the Pattern to all following) being Parties in the Decree, I suppose it

‖ *Ib.* §. 10.

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is meant no further, than that also these may assist in the Council, and give there a consentient, or attesting, but not a decisive Vote: which neither did the Emperors claim, when they presided therein. *See Dr. Field of the Church, p.* 646.

Soc. But I have not yet said all. For Fifthly, Were there none of the forenamed defects in it, ‖ *No Authority on Earth can oblige to* internal assent *in matters of Faith, or to any farther Obedience than that of* Silence. §. 19. ‖ *Whitby, p.* 15. *Stillingfleet, p.* 506, 537.

Prot. Yes, you stand obliged to yield a *conditional* assent, at least to the Definitions of these highest Courts, *i. e.* unless you can bring evident *Scripture*, or *Demonstration* against them.

Soc. I do not think Protestant Divines agree in this. I find indeed the Archbishop † requiring Evidence and Demonstration, for Inferiors *contradicting*, or publishing their dissent from the Councils Decrees, but not requiring thus much for their *denial* of *assent*. And I am told, ‖—*That in matters proposed by my Superiors, as* God's Word, *and of* Faith, *I am not tied to believe it such, till they manifest it to me to be* so; *and not that I am to believe it such, unless I can manifest it to be* contrary, *because my Faith can rest on no Humane Authority, but only on God's Word, and Divine Revelation.* And Dr. *Field* saith, —† *It is not necessary expressly to believe whatsoever the Council hath concluded, though it be true, unless by some other means it appear unto us to be true, and we be convinced of it in some other sort than by the bare Determination of the Council.* Till I am convinced then of my Error, the Obedience of *Silence* is the most that can be required of me. † §. 32. *n.* 5. & § 33. *consid.* 5. *n.* 1. ‖ *Dr. Ferne Case between the Churches, p.* 48, 49. & *Division of Churches, p.* 45. † *p.* 666.

But sixthly, I conceive my self in this point not obliged to this neither; considering my present persuasion, that this Council *manifestly* erred; and that, in an error of such high consequence (concerning the *unity* of the *most high God*) as is no way to be tolerated; and I want not evident Scriptures, and many other unanswerable Demonstrations, to shew it did so; and therefore being admitted into the honourable Function of the Ministry, I conceive I have a lawful Commission from an *higher Authority*, to publish this great Truth of *God*, and to contradict the *Councils* Decree. §. 20

Prot. But you may easily mistake that for *evident Scripture*, and those for *Demonstrations*, that are not. Concerning which you know what the Archbishop and Mr. *Hooker* say †——*That they are such, as proposed to any man, and understood, the mind cannot chuse but inwardly assent to them* ‖. You ought therefore first to propose these to your Superiors, or to the Church, desiring a redress §. 21. † *A.B. Laud* 245. ‖ *Id. p.* 227.

redreſs of ſuch Error by her calling another Council. And, if theſe Superiors, acquainted therewith, diſlike your Demonſtrations, which the Definition ſaith, if they be right ones, they muſt be by all, and therefore by them, aſſented to, methinks, (though this is not ſaid by the Archbiſhop) in humility you ought alſo to ſuſpect theſe Demonſtrations, and remain in ſilence at leaſt, and no further trouble the Church.

Soc. May therefore no particular Perſon, or Church, proceed to a Reformation of a former Doctrine, if theſe Superiors, firſt complained to, declare the Grounds of ſuch Perſons or Churches for it, not ſufficient?

Prot. I muſt not ſay ſo. But if they neglect (as they may) to conſider their *juſt* Reaſons ſo diligently as they ought, and to call a Council for the Correcting of ſuch Error according to the weight of theſe Reaſons, then here is place for Inferiors to proceed to a reformation of ſuch Error without them.

Soc. And who then ſhall judge, whether the Reaſons pretended are *defective*, or rather the preſent Church *negligent* in conſidering them?

Prot. Here, I confeſs, to make *the Superiors* Judges of this, is to caſt the Plaintiff before that any Council ſhall hear his Grievance, theſe Superiors, whoſe Faith appears to adhere to the former Council, being only Judges in their own Cauſe; and ſo the liberty of complaining will come to nothing ‖.

‖ *Stillingfl.* p. 479, 292.

Soc. The Inferiors then, that complain, I ſuppoſe are to judge of this. To proceed then. To theſe Superiors, in many diligent Writings, we have propoſed, as we think, many unanſwerable Scriptures, and Reaſons much advanced beyond thoſe repreſented by our Party to the former *Nicene* Council (and therefore from which Evidences of ours we have juſt cauſe to hope from a future Council a contrary Sentence); and finding no redreſs by their calling another Council for a reviewing this Point, we cannot but conceive it as lawful for a Socinian Church, Paſtor, or Biſhop, to reform for themſelves, and the Souls committed to them, in an Error appearing to them *manifeſt* and *intolerable*, as for the Proteſtants, or for Dr. *Luther*, to have done the ſame for Tranſubſtantiation, Sacrifice of the Maſs, and other Points that have been concluded, againſt the Truth, by ſeveral former Councils.

Prot. But ſuch were not *lawful General Councils*, as that of *Nice* was.

Soc. Whatever theſe Councils were, this much matters not,

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as to a *reformation* from them: for, had they been lawfully General, yet Proteſtants hold ‖, theſe not univerſally accepted may err even in *Fundamentals*; or, when ſo accepted, yet may err in Non-fundamentals; Errors *manifeſt*, and *intolerable*, and ſo may be appealed from to future; and thoſe not called, their Error preſently rectified by ſuch Parts of Chriſtianity as diſcern it; and alſo S. *Auſtin* ‖ is frequently quoted by them, ſaying—— *That paſt General Councils erring, may be corrected by other Councils following.*

‖ *See before, Diſc.* 3. §. 34, *&c.*

‖ *De Baptiſmo, l.* 2. *c.* 3.

Prot. But I pray you conſider, if that famous Council of *Nice* hath ſo erred, another Council called, may it alſo not err, notwithſtanding your Evidences propoſed to it? For, though perhaps ſome new demonſtrative Proofs you may pretend from ſeveral Texts more accurately compared and explained; yet you will not deny this ſufficient Evidence to have been extant for that moſt Learned Council to have ſeen the Truth, having then the ſame entire Rule of Faith as you now, the Scriptures, (in which, you ſay, your cleareſt Evidences lie) for their direction. When a future Council (then) is aſſembled, and hath heard your Plea, will you *aſſent* to it, and acquieſce in the Judgment thereof?

§. 22.

Soc. Yes, interpoſing the Proteſtant-Conditions of Aſſent, *If its Decree be according to God's Word, and we convinced thereof.*

Prot. Why, ſuch a ſubmiſſion of Judgment and Aſſent I ſuppoſe you will preſently yield to me in any thing, whereof you are convinced by me; may this future Council then challenge no further Duty from you? why then ſhould the Church be troubled to call it?

Soc. † *Though this future Council alſo ſhould err, yet it may afford Remedy againſt Inconveniences; and one great Inconvenience being, Breaking the Church's Peace; this is remedied by its Authority,* if I only yield the Obedience of Silence thereto.

† *Stillingfl. p.* 542.

Prot. But if your Obedience oblige not to *ſilence* concerning Councils paſt, becauſe of your new Evidences, neither will it to a future, if you think it alſo doth err; and either theſe Evidences remain ſtill unſatisfied, or theſe ſatisfied, yet ſome other new ones appear to call for a new Conſideration.

Soc. † *Becauſe it may alſo err, it follows not it muſt err; and it is probable that it ſhall not err, when the former Error is thus diſcovered, and if the Council proceed lawfully, be not overawed,* &c. ‖ But however, if I ought upon this review to be reſtrained to *ſilence*, yet, I not convinced of the truth of its Decree, this Silence is the ut-

† *Stillingfl. ibid.*

‖ *Id. p.* 526.

termoſt that any future Council, after its rejecting my Reaſons, can juſtly exact of me; and not *belief*, or *aſſent*, at all: It may not oblige me, that I ſhould relinquiſh that you call *Socinianiſm* at all, but that, not divulge it; whereas now by the Acts of *former* Councils (I would gladly know upon what rational ground) an *Anathema* is pronounced againſt me, if I do not believe the contrary, and I am declared to ſtand guilty of *Hereſie* meerly for retaining this Opinion; which retaining it is called *obſtinacy* and *contumacy* in me, after the Councils contrary *Definition.*

CONFERENCE IV.

His Plea, for his not being guilty of *Hereſie.*

THat *he cannot rightly according to Proteſtant Principles, be accuſed as guilty of* Hereſie, *for ſeveral reaſons.*

1. *Becauſe Proteſtants holding Hereſie to be an* obſtinate *defence of ſome error againſt a fundamental, he thinks from hence his tenent freed from being an Hereſie, as long as in ſilence he retains it, unleſs he engage further, to a publick pertinacious maintaining thereof.* §. 23.
2. *Fundamentals varying according to particular perſons, and ſufficient propoſal; none can conclude this point in the affirmative, to be,* as to him, *a fundamental, or, of the truth of which he hath had a ſufficient propoſal.*
3. *That a lawful General Council's declaring ſome point Hereſie, doth not neceſſarily argue that it is ſo; becauſe they may err in Fundamentals; or at leaſt in diſtinguiſhing them from other points.* §. 26.
4. *That he can have no autocatacriſie or obſtinacy in a diſſenting from their Definitions, till he is either actually convinced, or at leaſt hath had a ſufficient propoſal either of the truth of ſuch point defined: that ſuch Councils have authority to require ſubmiſſion, of judgment, and aſſent to their Definitions: of which conviction or ſufficient propoſal (that varies much, according to the differing conditions of ſeveral perſons) as to himſelf, none can judge ſave himſelf: and, conſequently, neither can they judge of his guilt of Hereſie.* Ib.

§. 23. 4. PRot. You know that all *Hereticks* are moſt juſtly *anathematized*, and cut off from being any longer Members of the Catholick Church, and ſo do remain excluded alſo from Salvation.

Salvation. Now this *Tenent* of yours hath always been esteemed by the Church of God a most pernicious *Heresie*.

Soc. I confess *Heresie* a most grievous Crime, dread and abhor it, and trust I am most free from such a guilt; and from this I have many ways of clearing my self. For Heresie (as Mr. *Chillingworth* defines it) || being not an erring, but an *obstinate* defence of an Error; not of any Error, but of one against a *necessary* or *fundamental* Article of the Christian Faith. First, Though this which I hold should be an error, and that against a Fundamental, yet my silence practised therein, can never be called an obstinate defence thereof, and therefore not my tenent an *Heresie*. 2. Since Fundamentals vary according to particular persons, and (as Mr. *Chillingworth* saith ||)—*No Catalogue thereof, that can be given, can universally serve for all men; God requiring more of them, to whom he gives more, and less of them, to whom he gives less*; —*And that may be sufficiently declared to one (all things considered) which (all things considered) is not to another sufficiently declared: and variety of circumstances makes it as impossible to set down an exact Catalogue of Fundamentals, as to make a Coat to fit the Moon in all her changes*: And (as Mr. *Stillingfleet* follows him†) *since the measure of Fundamentals depends on the sufficiency of the proposition; and none can assign what number of things are sufficiently propounded to the belief of all persons, or set down the exact bounds, as to all individuals, when their ignorance is inexcusable, and when not; or tell what is the measure of their capacity; what allowance God makes for the prejudice of Education*, &c. Hence I conceive my self free from Heresie, in this my opinion, on this score also; because though the contrary be to some others a Fundamental truth, and to be explicitly believed by them; yet to me, as not having any sufficient proposal, or conviction thereof, but rather of the contrary, it is no *Fundamental*, and consequently, my tenent opposing it, if an *error*, yet no *Heresie*.

|| p. 271.

|| p. 134.

† p. 98. 99.

Prot. Do not deceive your self; for though according to different revelations, to those that were without Law, or those under the Law, or those under the Gospel; *Fundamentals* generally spoken of, might be more to some than others; yet to all those who know and embrace the Gospel, we say ||; all Fundamentals are therein clearly proposed to all reasonable men, even the unlearned; and therefore the erring therein, to all such, cannot but be obstinate and Heretical.

§. 24.

|| *Chillingw.* p. 92.

Soc. Unless you mean only this, That all Fundamentals, (*i.e.* so many as are required of any one) are clear to him in Scripture;

ture; but not all the ſame Fundamentals, there clear to every one; but to ſome more of them, to ſome fewer; I ſee not how this laſt ſaid, accords with that ſaid before by the ſame perſon. But if you mean thus, then *Conſubſtantiality*, (the point we talk of) may be a Fundamental to you, and clear in Scripture, but alſo not clear to me in Scripture, and ſo no Fundamental, and hence I think my ſelf ſafe. For,——‖ *I believing all that is clear to me in Scripture, muſt needs believe all Fundamentals; and ſo I cannot incurr Hereſie, which is oppoſite to ſome fundamental*——* *The Scripture ſufficiently informing me what is the Faith, muſt of neceſſity alſo teach me what is Hereſie: That which is ſtreight will plainly teach us what is crooked; and one contrary cannot but manifeſt the other.*

‖ *Chillingw.* *p.* 367.
* *Ib.* 101.

§. 25. *Prot.* I pray you conſider a little better what you ſaid laſt; for ſince Hereſie as you grant it, is an obſtinate defence of error only againſt ſome *neceſſary* point of Faith; and all truth delivered in Scripture is not ſuch; unleſs you can alſo diſtinguiſh, in Scripture, theſe points of neceſſary Faith from others, you can have no certain knowledge of Hereſie; and the believing all that is delivered in Scripture, though it may preſerve you from *incurring* Hereſie, yet cannot direct you at all for *knowing* or *diſcerning* Hereſie, or an error againſt a fundamental or a neceſſary point of Faith, from other ſimple and leſs dangerous errors, that are not ſo: nor, by this can you ever know what errors are Hereſies, what not; and ſo after all your confidence, if by your neglect you happen not to believe ſome Scriptures in their true ſenſe, you can have no ſecurity in your Fundamental, or neceſſary Faith; or of your not incurring *Hereſie*. Neither, Secondly, according to your diſcourſe, hath the Church any means to know any one to be an *Heretick*; becauſe ſhe can never know the juſt latitude of his fundamentals. And ſo *Hereſie* will be a grievous ſin indeed; but walking under ſuch a vizard of non-ſufficient propoſal, as the Eccleſiaſtical Superiors cannot diſcover or puniſh it. Therefore to avoid ſuch confuſion in the Chriſtian Faith, there hath been alwaies acknowledged in the Church ſome authority for declaring Hereſie; and it may ſeem conviction enough to you, that her *moſt General Councils* have defined the contrary poſition to what you maintain; and received it for a *fundamental*. Of which Eccleſiaſtical Authority for declaring Hereſie, thus Dr. *Potter*, ‖—— *The Catholick Church is careful to ground all her declarations in matters of Faith, upon the divine authority of Gods written word. And there-*

‖ *p.* 97.

therefore whosoever wilfully oppoſeth a judgment ſo well grounded, is juſtly eſteemed an Heretick; not properly becauſe he diſobeys the Church; but becauſe he yields not to Scripture ſufficiently propounded, or cleared unto him [i. e. by the Church.] Where the Doctor ſeems to grant theſe two things: That all that the Catholick Church declares againſt Hereſie is grounded upon the Scripture; and that all ſuch as oppoſe her judgment are Hereticks: but only he adds, that they are not Hereticks properly, or formally for this oppoſing the Church, but for oppoſing the Scriptures. Whilſt therefore the *formalis ratio* of Hereſie is diſputed, that all ſuch are Hereticks ſeems granted. And the ſame Dr. elſewhere concludes thus,‖ ——*The miſtaker will never prove,* ‖ *p.* 132. *that we oppoſe any Declaration of the Catholick Church,* [he means ſuch a Church as makes Declarations, and that muſt be in her Councils]——*And therefore he doth unjuſtly charge us with Hereſie.* And again, he ſaith, † ——*Whatſoever opinion theſe ancient writers* † *p.* 103. [S. Auſtin, Epiphanius and others] *conceived to be contrary to the common or approved opinion of Chriſtians, that they called an Hereſie, becauſe it differed from the received opinion; not becauſe it oppoſed any formal Definition of the Church*: where, in ſaying, *not becauſe it oppoſed any Definition*, he means, *not only becauſe*. For, whilſt that, which differed from the received opinion of the Church, was accounted an Hereſie by them, that, which differed from a formal definition of the Church, was ſo much more. Something I find alſo for your better information, in the Learned Dr. *Hammond*, † commenting on that notable Text in *Titus*— *A man that is an Heretick after the firſt and ſecond admonition, reject,* † *Titus* 3. 11. [a Text implying contrary to your diſcourſe, Hereſie diſcoverable, and cenſurable by the Church,] where he explains αὐτοκατάκριτος *ſelf-condemned; not to ſignifie a mans publick accuſing or condemning his own doctrines or practices; for that condemnation would rather be a motive to free one from the Church's Cenſures. Nor 2ly to denote one that offends againſt Conſcience, and though he knows he be in the wrong, yet holds out in oppoſition to the Church; for ſo, none but Hypocrites would be Hereticks; and he that ſtood againſt the Doctrin of Chriſt and his Church in the pureſt times* [you may gueſs whom he means] *ſhould not be an Heretick: and ſo no Heretick could poſſibly be admoniſhed or cenſured by the Church, for no man would acknowledge of himſelf, that what he did was by him done againſt his own Conſcience,* [the plea which you alſo make here for your ſelf.] *But to be an expreſſion of his ſeparation from, and diſobedience to the Church; and ſo an evidence of the* ἐξέσταται ἀμαρτάνει *his*

his being perverted, and ſinning wilfully, and without excuſe. [See more Proteſtants cited to this purpoſe, *Diſc.* 3. §. 19. What ſay you to this?

§. 26. *Soc.* What theſe Authors ſay, as you give their ſenſe, ſeems to me contrary to the *Proteſtant* Principles, [*See D.* Potter, *p.* 165, 167.——*D.* Hammond *of Hereſie*, §. 7. *n.*——§. 9. *n.* 8. *Def. of L. Falkl. c.* 1. *p.* 23.] and to their own poſitions elſewhere; neither, ſurely, will *Proteſtants* tye themſelves to this meaſure and trial of *autocatacriſie*. For, ſince they ſay; That lawful General Councils may err in Fundamentals; theſe Councils may alſo define, or declare ſomething *Hereſie* that is not againſt a Fundamental; and if ſo, I, though in this ſelf-convinced, that ſuch is their Definition, yet am moſt free from Hereſie in my not aſſenting to it, or (if they err intolleraby) in oppoſing it. Again, ſince Proteſtants ſay, Councils may err in diſtinguiſhing Fundamentals, theſe Councils may err alſo in diſcerning Hereſie, which is an error againſt a Fundamental, from other errors that are againſt non-Fundamentals. Again: Whilſt I cannot diſtinguiſh Fundamentals in their Definitions, thus no Definition of a General Council may be receded from by me, for fear of my incurring Hereſie; a conſequence which Proteſtants allow not. Again: Since Proteſtants affirm all Fundamentals plain in Scripture, why ſhould they place *autocatacriſie*, or ſelf-conviction, in reſpect of the Declaration of the Church rather than of the Scripture? But, to requite your former quotations, I will ſhew in plainer Language the ſtating of Proteſtant Divines concerning Autocatacriſie as to the Definitions of the Church, under which my opinion alſo finds ſufficient ſhelter; *We have no aſſurance at all* (ſaith Biſhop *Bramhall* †) *that all General Councils were, and always ſhall be ſo prudently managed, and their proceedings always ſo orderly and upright, that we dare make all their ſentences a ſufficient conviction of all Chriſtians, which they are bound to believe under pain of damnation.* [I add, or under pain of Hereſie]—And *Ib.* p. 102. ——*I acknowledge* (ſaith he) *that a General Council, may make that revealed truth neceſſary to be believed by a Chriſtian as a point of Faith, which formerly was not neceſſary to be believed; that is, whenſoever the reaſons and grounds of truth produced by the Council, or the authority of the Council* (*which is, and always ought to be very great with all ſober diſcreet Chriſtians*) *do convince a man in his Conſcience of the truth of the Councils Definitions*: [which truth I am as yet not convinced of, neither from the reaſons nor authority of the Coun-

† *Reply to Chalced. p.* 105.

ci]

cil of *Nice*. Or, if you had rather have it out of Dr. *Potter* ——*It is not reſiſting* (ſaith he ‖) *the voice or definitive ſentence, which makes an Heretick; but an obſtinate ſtanding out againſt evident Scripture ſufficiently cleared unto him. And the Scripture may then be ſaid to be ſufficiently cleared when it is ſo opened, that a good and teachable mind* (*loving and ſeeking truth*) [my Conſcience convinceth me not, but that ſuch I am] *cannot gainſay it.*—Again † ——*It is poſſible* (ſaith he) *that the ſentence of a Council or Church may be erroneous, either becauſe the opinion condemned is no Hereſie or error againſt the Faith, in it ſelf conſidered; or becauſe the party ſo condemned is not ſufficiently convinced in his underſtanding* (*not clouded with prejudice, ambition, vain-glory, or the like paſſion*) *that it is an error* [one of theſe I account my ſelf.] Or out of Dr. *Hammond*,† ——*It muſt be lawful for the Church of God*, [any Church, or any Chriſtian, upon the Doctors reaſon,] *as well as for the Biſhop of* Rome, *to enquire whether the Decrees of an Univerſal Council have been agreeable to Apoſtolical Tradition or no; and if they be found otherwiſe, to eject them out, or not to receive them into their* belief. *And then ſtill it is the matter of the Decrees, and the Apoſtolicalneſs of them, and the force of the teſtification, whereby they are approved and acknowledged to be ſuch, which gives the authority to the Council; and nothing elſe is ſufficient, where that is not to be found.* And elſewhere he both denies in General an Infallibility of Councils, ‖ and grounds the Reverence due to the Four firſt Councils *on their ſetting down and convincing the truth of their Doctrin out of the Scripture words underſtood with piety,——and the fetching their Definitions regularly from the ſenſe thereof, which the General Churches had received down from the Apoſtles.* ‖ [Upon which follows, that, in ſuch caſe, where a Lawful General Council doth not ſo, (as poſſibly it may, and Inferiors are to conſider for themſelves, whether it doth not) there may be no Heretical Autocatacriſie in a diſſent from it, nor this diſſent *an evidence of the* ἐξέλεγξις *and* ἀυτοκατάκρισις *his being perverted and ſinning wilfully, and without excuſe.*] ——Laſtly, thus Doctor *Stillingfleet* concerning *Hereſie* ‖——*The formal reaſon of Hereſie is denying ſomething ſuppoſed to be of divine Revelation; and therefore*, 2ly. *None can reaſonably be accuſed of Hereſie, but ſuch as have ſufficient reaſon to believe, that that which they deny is revealed by God. And therefore*, 3ly. *None can be guilty of Hereſie for denying any thing declared by the Church; unleſs they have ſufficient reaſon to believe, that whatever is declared by the Church is revealed by God; and therefore the Church's Definition cannot make any* Hereticks, *but*

‖ *p.* 128.

† *p.* 129.

† *Hereſie, p.* 114.

‖ *Of Hereſie p.* 96.

‖ *Rat. Account. p.* 73.

ſuch

ſuch as have reaſon to believe, that ſhe cannot err in her Definitions. From hence alſo he gathers, *That Proteſtants are in leſs danger of Hereſie than Papiſts, till theſe give them more ſufficient reaſons to prove, that whatever the Church declares, is certainly revealed by God.* Thus he. Now ſuch ſufficient proving reaſons as Proteſtants plead, that Papiſts have not yet given them concerning this matter of Church-Authority, I alledge, that neither have they nor others given me. To be *ſelf-condemned*, therefore, in my diſſent from the definition of the Council of *Nice*, I muſt firſt have ſufficient reaſon propoſed to me to believe, (and ſo remain ſelf-condemned and Heretical in disbelieving it) this point; *viz.* That the Church, or her Council, hath power to define matters of Faith in ſuch manner, as to require my aſſent thereto. Which ſo long as I find no ſufficient reaſon to believe, I ſuppoſe I am freed (without obſtinacy or Hereſie, or being therein ſelf-condemned,) from yielding aſſent to any particular matter of Faith, which the Church defines. And, had I ſufficient reaſon propoſed to me for believing this point, yet ſo long as I am not actually convinced thereof, I become only guilty of a fault of *ignorance*, not *obſtinacy*, or *autocatacriſie*, or *Hereſie*; for, if I am ſelf-condemned, or guilty of obſtinacy in disbelieving the foreſaid points, || *Then I become ſo, either by the Church's definition of this point, or without it. By reaſon of the Church's definition of this it cannot be; for this very power of defining is the thing in queſtion, and therefore cannot be cleared to me by the Church's defining it* †: and thus, *That thing is propoſed to me in the definition to be believed, which muſt be ſuppoſed to be believed by me already, before ſuch propoſal or definition, or elſe the definition is not neceſſary to be believed.* † Nor *without*, or *before* ſuch definition, can I have an *autocatacriſie*; becauſe this autocatacriſie, you ſay with Dr. *Hammond*, ariſeth from my diſobedience to the Church.

|| *Stillingfl.* *p.* 99.

† *Stillingfl.* *p.* 74.

† *Ib. p.* 99.

Prot. Methinks, you make the ſame plea for your ſelf in this matter, as if one, that is queſtioned for not obeying the *divine precepts*, or not believing the divine Revelations delivered in *Scripture*, ſhould think to excuſe himſelf by this anſwer; that indeed he doth not believe the *Scripture* to be *God's Word*; and therefore he conceives, that he cannot reaſonably be required to believe that which is contained therein. And, as ſuch a perſon hath as much reaſon (though this, not from the Scripture, yet from Apoſtolical Tradition) to believe that Scripture is Gods Word, as to believe what is written in it; ſo have you, though not from the *Nicene* Council defining it, yet from Scripture

Scripture and Tradition manifesting it, as much reason to believe its authority of defining, as what is defined. It's true indeed; that had you not sufficient proposal, or sufficient reason to know this your duty of *Assent* to this definition of the Council of *Nice*, you were faultless in it; but herein lies your danger, that from finding a *non actual conviction* of the truth, within, (hindred there by I know not what supine negligence, or strong self-conceit, *&c.*) you gather a *non-sufficient proposal*, without.

Soc. It remains then to enquire, who shall judge concerning this *sufficient proposal*, or sufficient reason, which I am said to have, to believe what the *Nicene* Council, or the Church hath declared in this point. ‖ Whether the Church's judgment is to be taken by me in this, or my own made use of; If *her judgment*, the ground of my belief and of Heresie lies still in the Church's *definition*; and thus it will be all one in effect, whether I believe what she declares, without sufficient reason; or learn this of her, when there is sufficient reason to believe so. It must be then, *my own judgment*, I am to be directed by in this matter †: and if so, then it is to be presumed, that God doth both afford me some means not to be mistaken therein; and also some certain knowledge when I do use this means aright: (for, without these two I can have no security in my own judgment in a matter of so high concernment, as *Heresie* and *fundamental Faith* is.) Now this means, in this matter, I presume I have daily used, in that I find my Conscience, after much examination, therein to acquit me, unless you can prescribe me some other surer evidence, without sending me back again to the *authority* of the *Church*. § 27. ‖ *Stillingfl. p.* 73. † *See Still. p.* 479.

Prot. 1. Whilst your discovery of your tenent to be an *Heresie* depends on your having sufficient reason to believe it is so. And 2. The judgment of your having, or not having sufficient reason to believe this, is left to your self, the Church hath no means to know you or any other to be an Heretick, till they declare themselves to be so. And thus, in striving to free your self from Heresie, you have freed all mankind from it, (as to any external discovery and convincement thereof) and cancelled such a sin; unless we can find one, that will confess himself to maintain a thing against his own Conscience.

Soc. If I, ſo do the Proteſtants; for, they alſo hold none guilty of *Hereſie*, for denying any thing declared by the Church, unleſs they have reaſon to believe, that whatever is declared by the Church is revealed by God; and of this ſufficient reaſon they make not the *Church* or *Superiors*, but *themſelves*, the Judge.

CONFERENCE V.

His Plea, for his not being guilty of *Schiſm.*

1. *THat the Socinian Churches have not forſaken the whole Church Catholick, or the external Communion of it: but only left one part of it that was corrupted; and reformed another part,* (i.e.) *themſelves. Or, that he, and the Socinian Churches, being a part of the Catholick, they have not ſeparated from the whole, becauſe not from themſelves.* §. 28.

2. *That their ſeparation being for an error unjuſtly impoſed upon them as a condition of Communion, the Schiſm is not theirs, who made the ſeparation; but theirs who cauſed it.* §. 29.

Beſides that, whatever the truth of things be; yet ſo long as they are required by any Church to profeſs they believe, what they do not, their ſeparation cannot be ſaid cauſleſs, and ſo Schiſm. §. 32.

3. *That though he and his party had forſaken the external Communion of all other Churches, yet not the internal; in which they remain ſtill united to them: both in that internal Communion of* Charity, *in not condemning all other Churches as non-Catholick; and in that of* Faith, *in all Eſſentials and Fundamentals, and in all ſuch points, wherein the Unity of the Church Catholick conſiſts.* §. 30.

4. *That the doctrin of* Conſubſtantiality *for which they departed, is denyed by them to be any Fundamental; nor can the Churches, from which they depart for it, be a competent Judge againſt them, that it is ſo.* §. 34.

5. *That, though they are ſeparaters from the Roman, yet not from the Reformed Churches, which Churches leave men to the liberty of their own judgment; nor require any internal aſſent to their doctrins* (*in which thing theſe blame the tyranny of the Roman* Church) *ſave only*

only conditional, if any be convinced of the truth thereof; or, not convinced of the contrary. §. 35.

6. *In fine, that for enjoying and continuing in the Protestant* Communion *he maketh as full a profession of conformity to her Doctrins as* Mr. Chillingworth *hath done in several places of his book, which yet was accepted as sufficient.* §. 41.

5. *Prot.* I have yet one thing more, about which to question you. If you will not acknowledge your opinion *Heresie* in opposing the publick judgment, and definition of the Catholick Church in that most reverend Council of *Nice*, upon pretence that you have not had a convincing Proposal, that this Definition was therein made according to *God's Word*, or the *Scriptures*; yet, how will you clear your self, or your Socinian Congregations of *Schism*? avoidable upon no plea of adherence to Scripture, if it shall appear, that you have for this opinion deserted the Communion of the *Catholick Church*, out of which Church is no Salvation. §. 28.

Soc. † *I grant there neither is, nor can be any just cause to depart from the Church of* Christ; *no more than from* Christ *himself: therefore I utterly deny, that our Churches have made any separation from the* Church Catholick *at all: and this for many reasons. For* 1st. †—*We have not forsaken the whole Church, or the external Communion of it: but only that* part *of it which is corrupted, and still will be so; and have not forsaken, but only reformed another* part *of it, which part* we our selves *are: and I suppose you will not go about to perswade us, that we have forsaken* our selves, *or our own Communion. And if you urge, that we joined our selves to no other part, therefore we separated from the whole: I say, it follows not, inasmuch as* our selves *were a part of it, and still continued so, and therefore can no more separate from the whole, than from our selves.* † *Dr. Potter p. 75.* † *Chillingw. p. 274.*

Prot. So then, it seems we need fear no *Schism*, from the *Church Catholick* till a part can divide from it self, which can never be.

Soc. Next, As for our separating from all other particular Churches, the ground of our Separation being an error, which hath crept into the Communion of these Churches, and which is unjustly imposed upon us in order to this Communion, we conceive, in this case, if any, *They, not We*, are the *Schismaticks*: for as the Arch-Bishop ‖.——*The Schism is theirs, whose the Cause of it is; and he makes the separation, who gives* §. 29. ‖ *Lawd. p.* 142.

the firſt juſt cauſe of it, not he that makes actual ſeparation, upon a juſt cauſe preceding.

§. 30. Again, Though we have made an actual Separation from them, as to the not-conforming to, or alſo as to the reforming of an error: yet, Firſt, *As to Charity*; we do ſtill retain with the ſame Churches our former Communion.——*Not dividing from them through the breach of Charity*; *Or condemning all other Churches, as no parts of the Catholick Church, and drawing the Communion wholly to our ſelves, as did thoſe famous Schiſmaticks, the Donatiſts.* [See Doctor *Ferne Diviſion of Churches*, p. 105. and 31, 32.]

§. 31. Next, *as to matter of Faith*: We hold that all ſeparation from all particular Churches in ſuch a thing, wherein the *unity* of the Catholick Church doth not conſiſt, is no ſeparation from the whole Church, nor is any thing more, than our ſuſpenſion from the Communion of particular Churches, till ſuch their error is reformed. For, as Doctor *Stillingfleet* ‖—— *There can be no ſeparation from the whole Church but in ſuch things, wherein the unity of the whole Church lies:—Whoſo therefore ſeparates from any particular Church as to things not concerning their being, is only ſeparated from the Communion of that Church, and not the Catholick.* Now, that for which we have ſeparated from other Churches, we conceive not ſuch, as is eſſential, or concerns the being of a Church ſo, that without it we or they cannot ſtill retain the eſſence thereof; we declare alſo our readineſs to joyn with them again, if this error be corrected, or at leaſt not impoſed: And ‖ (as Dr. *Stillingfleet* ſaith) ——*Where there is this readineſs of Communion, there is no abſolute ſeparation from the Church as ſuch, but only ſuſpending Communion, till ſuch abuſes be reformed*, [or not preſſed upon us]. And as Biſhop Bramhall† ——*When one part of the univerſal Church ſeparateth it ſelf from another part, not abſolutely or in eſſentials, but reſpectively in abuſes, and innovations, not as it is a part of the univerſal Church, but only ſo far as it is corrupted and degenerated* [whether in doctrin or manners] *it doth ſtill retain a Communion not only with the Catholick Church, and with all the Orthodox members of the Catholick Church, but even with that corrupted Church, from which it is ſeparated, except only in ſuch Corruptions.*

‖ p. 331.

‖ *Stilling. ib.*

† *Vindic. of the Church of Eng. p* 9.

§. 32. *Prot.* Saving better Judgments, methinks a ſeparation (if cauſeleſs) from the Communion of all other Churches, or from thoſe who are our Superiors, in a leſſer matter than ſuch a Funda-

Fundamental or essential point of Christianity as destroys the being of a Church, should be *Schism*; and the smaller the point for which we separate, the greater the guilt of our separation. Were not the Donatists Schismaticks in rejecting the Catholick Communion, requiring their conformity in such a point, in which St. *Cyprian*'s error before the Church's defining thereof was very excusable; and the African Congregations in his time not un-churched thereby?

Soc. ‖——*But the Donatists did cut off from the Body of Christ, and the hope of Salvation, the Church from which they separated, which is the property of Schismaticks.* ——And † ——*They were justly charged with Schism, because they confined the Catholick Church within their own bounds.* But as Dr. *Ferne* saith ‖—*Had the Donatists only used their liberty and judgment in that practice of re-baptizing Hereticks, leaving other Churches to their liberty; and (though thinking them in an error for admitting Hereticks, without baptizing them, yet) willing to have Communion with them, as parts of the Catholick Church (saving the practices wherein they differed), then had they not been guilty of Schism.* In that which I hold I only follow my Conscience, condemn not the Churches holding otherwise: On the other side ‖ *Christ hath forbid me under pain of damnation to profess what I believe not* [be it small or great] *and consequently under the same penalty hath obliged me to leave the Communion, in which I cannot remain without the Hypocritical Profession of such a thing, which I am convinced to be erroneous.* † *At least this I know, that the Doctrin which I hold, to me* seems *true, and the contrary, which I have forsaken,* seems *false: and therefore, without remorse of Conscience, I may profess that, but this I cannot: and a separation, for preserving my Conscience, I hope will never be judged causeless.*

‖ *D. Potter p. 76.*
† *Stillingfl. p. 359.*
‖ *Division of Churches. p. 106.*
‖ *Chillingw. p. 278.*
† *Ib. 279.*

Prot. At this rate none will be a Schismatick, but he who knows he erreth (*i. e.* not who holdeth, but only who professeth an error); or who knows, that the point, for the non-conformity to which, required of him, he deserts the Church, is a *Truth*, and the contrary, which he maintains, an error. But Doctor *Hammond* † tells you. *That he that doth not communicate with those* [I suppose he means Superiors] *the condition of whose Communion contains nothing really erroneous or sinful, though the doctrin so proposed as the condition of their Communion, be apprehended by him, to whom it is thus proposed, to be false, remains in Schism.*

§. 33.

† *Of Schism, p. 23, 24, 25.*

Soc.

Soc. And at this rate, all thoſe, who ſeparate from the Church, requiring their aſſent to what is indeed a truth, will be Schiſmaticks, (and that, whether in a point Fundamental, or not Fundamental,) though they have uſed all the induſtry, all the means they can (except this, the relying on their Superiors judgment) not to err; unleſs you will ſay, that all truths, even not Fundamental, are in Scripture ſo clear, that none uſing a right induſtry, can (neither) err in them; which no *Chillingworth* hath maintained hitherto.

§. 34. *Prot.* But we may let this paſs; for, your ſeparation was in a point perſpicuous enough in Scripture (and ſo you void of ſuch excuſe): was in a point Eſſential and Fundamental, and in which a wrong belief deſtroys any longer Communion of a particular Perſon or Church, with the Catholick.

Soc. This I utterly deny; nor ſee I by what way this can ever be proved againſt me, for you can aſſign no Eccleſiaſtical Judge that can diſtinguiſh Fundamentals, Neceſſaries, or Eſſentials, from thoſe points that are not ſo, as hath been ſhewed already. And as Dr. *Stillingfleet* ‖ urgeth concerning Hereſie, ſo may I concerning Schiſm: ——What are the meaſures whereby we ought to judge, what things are Eſſential to the being of Chriſtianity, or of the Church? Whether muſt the *Church's judgment* be taken, or every *mans own judgment*? if the *former*, the Ground of Schiſm lies ſtill in the Church's definitions, contrary to what Proteſtants affirm: if *the latter*; then no one can be a Schiſmatick, but he, that oppoſeth that of which *he is*, or *may be convinced*, that it is a Fundamental, or eſſential matter of Faith. If he be only a Schiſmatick, that oppoſeth that, of which *he is convinced*; then no man is a Schiſmatick, but he that goes againſt his preſent Judgment; and ſo there will be few Schiſmaticks in the world; If he, that oppoſeth that, which *he may be convinced* of; then again, it is that which *he may be convinced* of, either in the Church's judgment or in his own: If in the Church's, it comes to the ſame iſſue, as in the former: If *in his own*; how I pray, ſhall I know, that I may be convinced of what, uſing a due indeavour, I am not convinced already? or, how ſhall I know, when a due induſtry is uſed? and if I cannot know this, how ſhould I ever ſettle my ſelf unleſs it be upon *Authority*, which you allow not. Again, I am taught, that any particular, whether Perſon or Church,

‖ p. 73.

may

may judge for themſelves with the *Judgment* of *Diſcretion*: And in the matter of Chriſtian Communion,——†*That nothing can be more unreaſonable, than that the Society* [ſuppoſe it be a Council] *impoſing conditions of its Communion* [ſuppoſe the Council of *Nice* impoſing Conſubſtantiality ſo] *ſhould be Judge, whether thoſe conditions be juſt and equitable or no: And eſpecially in this caſe, where a conſiderable Body of Chriſtians judge ſuch things required to be unlawful conditions of Communion, what juſtice or reaſon is there, that the party accuſed ſhould ſit judge in his own cauſe?* † *Stillingfl. p.* 292.

Prot. By this way no *Separatiſt* can ever be a *Schiſmatick*, if he is conſtituted the judge, whether the reaſon of his ſeparation is juſt.

Soc. And in the other way, there can never be any juſt cauſe of ſeparation at all, if the Church-Governors, from whom I ſeparate, are to judge, whether that be an error, for which I ſeparate.

Prot. It ſeems ſomething that you ſay: But yet, though upon ſuch conſideration, a free uſe of your own *judgment*, as to providing for your own Salvation is granted you; yet, methinks in this matter you have ſome greater cauſe to ſuſpect it, ſince ſeveral Churches, having of late taken liberty to examine by Gods Word more ſtrictly the corrupt doctrins of former ages, yet theſe *reformed*, as well as the other *unreformed*, ſtand oppoſite to you; and neither thoſe profeſſing to follow the Scriptures, nor thoſe profeſſing to follow Tradition, and Church-Authority; neither thoſe requiring ſtrict obedience and ſubmiſſion of judgment, nor thoſe indulging Chriſtian liberty, countenance your doctrin. But you ſtand alſo *Reformers* of the *Reformation*, and ſeparated from all. §. 35.

Soc. Soft a little. Though I ſtand ſeparated indeed from the preſent unreformed Churches; or alſo (if you will) from the whole Church that was before *Luther*; yet I both enjoy the external Communion, and think I have reaſon to account my ſelf a true member of the Churches Reformed; and, as I never condemned them, or thought Salvation not attainable in them; ſo neither am I (that I know of) excluded by, or from them; ſo long as I retain my opinion in ſilence, and do not diſturb their peace; and I take my ſelf alſo on theſe terms to be a member, in particular, of the Church of *England*, wherein I have been educated. For, all theſe Churches (as confeſſing themſelves *fallible* in their decree) do not require of their Subjects

jects to yield any *internal aſſent* to their Doctrins; or to profeſs any thing againſt their Conſcience, and in Hypocriſie; and do forbear to uſe that Tyranny upon any for enjoying their Communion, which they ſo much condemn in that Church, from which, for this very thing, they were forced to part Communion, and to reform. Of this matter, thus, Mr. *Whitby* †—*Whom did our Convocation ever damn for not internally receiving their decrees? Do they not leave every man to the liberty of his judgment?—They do not require, that we ſhould in all things believe, as they believe; but that we ſhould ſubmit to their determination, and not contradict them; their deciſions are not obtruded as infallible Oracles, but only ſubmitted to in order to peace and unity——So that their work is rather to ſilence, than to determine diſputes,* &c.—— *and* p. 438. *We grant a neceſſity, or at leaſt a convenience of a Tribunal to decide controverſies, but how? Not by cauſing any perſon to believe what he did not antecedently to theſe decrees, upon the ſole authority of the Council; but by ſilencing our diſputes, and making us acquieſce in what is propounded without any publick oppoſition to it, keeping our opinions to our ſelves——A liberty of uſing private diſcretion in approving or rejecting any thing as delivered, or not, in Scripture, we think ought to be allowed; for faith cannot be compelled; and by taking away this liberty from men, we ſhould force them to become Hypocrites, and ſo profeſs outwardly what inwardly they disbelieve.*——And ſee Dr. Stillingfleets Rational Account, p. 104. where, ſpeaking of the obligation to the 39. Articles, he ſaith, —*That the Church of* England, *excommunicates ſuch as openly oppoſe her doctrin, ſuppoſing her fallible; the Roman Church excommunicates all, who will not believe whatever ſhe defines to be infallibly true.——That the Church of* England *bindeth men to peace to her determinations, reſerving to men the liberty of their judgments, on pain of excommunication if they violate that peace. For it is plain on the one ſide, where a Church pretends infallibility, the excommunication is directed againſt the perſons for refuſing to give internal aſſent to what ſhe defines: But where a Church does not pretend to that, the excommunication reſpects wholly that overt Act, whereby the Church's peace is broken. And if a Church be bound to look to her own peace, no doubt ſhe hath power to excommunicate ſuch as openly violate the bonds of it; which is only an act of caution in a Church to preſerve her ſelf in unity; but where it is given out, that the Church is infallible, the excommunication muſt be ſo much the more unreaſonable, becauſe it is againſt thoſe internal acts of the mind, over which the Church as ſuch hath no direct power.*——And p. 55. he quotes theſe words

† *p.* 102.

out

out of Bishop *Bramhall* † to the same sense,—*We do not suffer any man to reject the* 39 *Articles of the Church of* England *at his pleasure; yet neither do we look upon them as essentials of saving faith, or legacies of Christ, and his Apostles; but, in a mean, as pious opinions fitted for the preservation of unity; neither do we oblige any man to believe them, but only not to contradict them. By which we see what vast difference there is, between those things which are required by the Church of* England *in order to peace, and those which are imposed by the Church of* Rome, *&c.* Lastly, thus Mr. *Chillingworth* † of the just authority of Councils and Synods (beyond which the Protestant Synods, or Convocations pretend not.)——*The Fathers of the Church* (saith he) *in after times* [*i. e.* after the Apostles] *might have just cause to declare their judgment, touching the sense of some general Articles of the Creed: but to oblige others to receive their declarations under pain of damnation, what warrant they had, I know not: He, that can shew, either that the Church of all ages was to have this Authority; or, that it continued in the Church for some ages, and then expired: He, that can shew either of these things let him; for my part I cannot. Yet I willingly confess the judgment of a Council, though not infallible, is yet so far directive, and obliging, that* (without apparent reason to the contrary) *it may be sin to reject it, at least not to afford it an outward submission for publick peace sake.* [Thus much, as the Protestant Synods seem contented with, so I allow]—Again p. 375. He saith——*Any thing besides Scripture, and the plain, irrefragable, indubitable consequences of it, Well may Protestants hold it as matter of opinion; but as matter of faith and religion, neither can they with coherence to their own grounds believe it themselves, nor require the belief of it of others, without most high and most schismatical presumption.* Thus he: now I suppose that either no Protestant Church or Synod will stile the Son's coequal God-head with the Father a plain irrefragable, indubitable Scripture, or consequence thereof, about which is, and hath been so much contest; or with as much reason, they may call whatever points they please such, however controverted, and then, what is said here signifies nothing.

† *Schism guarded, p.* 192.

† *p.* 200.

Prot. Be not mistaken, I pray: especially concerning the Church of *England*. For though she, for several Points, imposed formerly by the Tyranny of the *Roman* Church, hath granted liberty of Opinion, or at least freed her Subjects from obligation to believe so in them, as the Church formerly required; yet as to exclusion of your Doctrin, she professeth firmly to believe

§. 36.

believe the three Creeds; and concerning the Additions made in the two latter Creeds to the firſt, Dr. *Hammond* † acknowledgeth,——*That they being thus ſettled by the Univerſal Church, were, and ſtill are in all reaſon, without diſputing, to be received and embraced by the Proteſtant Church, and every meek Member thereof, with that reverence that is due to Apoſtolick Truths; with that thankfulneſs which is our meet tribute to thoſe ſacred Champions, for their ſeaſonable, and provident propugning our faith, with ſuch timely and neceſſary application to practice, that the Holy Ghoſt, ſpeaking to us now, under the times of the New Teſtament by the Governors of the Chriſtian Churches, (Chriſts mediate ſucceſſors in the Prophetick, Paſtoral, Epiſcopal Office) as he had formerly ſpoken by the Prophets of the Old Teſtament, ſent immediately by him, may find a cheerful audience, and receive all uniform ſubmiſſion from us.* Thus, Dr. *Hammond* of the Church of *England's* aſſent to the three Creeds. She aſſenteth alſo to the definitions of the four firſt General Councils: And the Act 1 *Eliz.* ‖ declares Hereſie that, which hath been adjudged ſo by them; now in the definitions of theſe 4 firſt General Councils your enent hath received a mortal wound. But laſtly, *the* 4*th* Canon in the Engliſh Synod held 1640. † particularly ſtiles *Socinianiſm a moſt damnable and curſed Hereſie, and contrary to the Articles of Religion eſtabliſhed in the Church of* England: *and orders that any, convicted of it, be excommunicated and not abſolved, but upon his repentance and abjuration.* Now further than this [*namely, excommunication upon conviction.*] No other Church I ſuppoſe hath, or can proceed againſt your Hereſie; It being received as a common Axiom in the Canon Law; that *Eccleſia non judicat de occultis*,——And——*Cogitationis pœnam nemo patitur.*——And——*Ob peccatum merè internum Eccleſiaſtica cenſura ferri non poteſt.* And in all Churches every one, of what internal perſwaſion ſoever, continues externally at leaſt a member thereof, till the Church's cenſures do exclude him.

† *Of Fundamentals.* p. 90:

‖ *cap.* 1.

† *Can.* 4.

§. 37. *Soc.* The Church of *England* alloweth, aſſenteth to, and teacheth, what ſhe judgeth evident in the Scripture; for ſo ſhe ought; what ſhe believes, or aſſenteth to, I look not after, but what ſhe enjoyns. Now I yield all that obedience in this point, that ſhe requires from me; and ſo I preſume ſhe will acknowledge me a dutiful Son.

Prot.

Prot. What obedience when as you deny one of her chiefeſt, and moſt fundamental doctrins?

Soc. If I miſtake not her principles, ſhe requires of me no internal belief or aſſent to any of her doctrins, but only, 1ſt. *Silence*, or *non-contradiction* † or 2ly, a *conditional belief*, *i. e.* whenever I ſhall be convinced of the truth thereof. Now in both theſe I moſt readily obey her. For the 1ſt, I have ſtrictly obſerved it, kept my opinion to my ſelf; unleſs this my diſcourſe with you hath been a breach of it; but then I was at leaſt a dutiful ſubject of this Church at the beginning of our diſcourſe; and for the 2d, whether *actual conviction*, or *ſufficient propoſal*, be made the condition of my aſſent, or ſubmiſſion of judgment, I am conſcious to my ſelf of no diſobedience, as to either of theſe; for an *actual conviction* I am ſure I have not: and, ſuppoſing, that I have had a *ſufficient propoſal*, and do not know it, my obedience, upon the Proteſtant principles, can poſſibly advance no further, than it now doth. The *Apoſtles Creed* I totally embrace, and would have it the ſtanding bound of a Chriſtian Faith. For other *Creeds*: I ſuppoſe, no more belief is neceſſary to the Articles of the *Nicene Creed*, than is required to thoſe of the *Athanaſian*. And, of what kind the neceſſity is of believing thoſe, Dr. *Stillingfleet* ſtates on this manner †——*That the belief of a thing may be ſuppoſed neceſſary, either as to the matter, becauſe the matter is to be believed in it ſelf neceſſary; or becauſe of the clear conviction of mens underſtandings; that, though the matters be not in themſelves neceſſary, yet being revealed by God, they muſt be explicitly believed: but then, the neceſſity of this belief doth extend no further, than the clearneſs of the conviction doth.* Again, *that the neceſſity of believing any thing ariſing from the Church's definition* [upon which motive you ſeem to preſs the belief of the Article of *Conſubſtantiality*] *doth depend upon the Conviction, that whatever the Church defines is neceſſary to be believed. And, where that is not received as an antecedent principle, the other cannot be ſuppoſed.* [Now this principle neither I, nor yet Proteſtants, accept]. Then he concludes——*That as to the Athenaſian Creed* [and the ſame it is for the *Nicene.*] *It is unreaſonable to imagine, that the Church of* England *doth own this neceſſity, purely on the account of the Church's definition of thoſe things which are not fundamental, it being directly contrary to her ſenſe in her* 19*th and* 20*th Articles.* [Now, which Articles of this Creed are not Fundamental, ſhe defines nothing; nor do the 19, 20, or 21.

† *p.* 70, 71.

Articles own a neceſſity of believing the Church's Definitions, even as to *Fundamentals.*] *And hence, that the ſuppoſed neceſſity of the belief of the Articles of the Athanaſian Creed muſt, according to the ſenſe of the Church of* England, *be reſolved, either into the neceſſity of the matters, or into that neceſſity, which ſuppoſeth clear conviction, that the things therein contained are of divine Revelation.* Thus he. Now, for ſo many Articles as I am either convinced of the matter to be believed, that it is in it ſelf neceſſary; or, that they are divine Revelations, I do moſt readily yield my Faith, and aſſent thereto. Now, to make ſome Reply to the other things you have objected.

§. 38. The Act 1 *Eliz.* allows no Definitions of the Firſt General Councils in declaring *Hereſie*, but with this limitation, that, in ſuch Councils, ſuch thing be declared *Hereſie* by the expreſs and plain words of the *Canonical Scripture.* On which terms I alſo accept them.

§. 39. Dr. *Hammond*'s affirming, *That all additions ſettled by the Univerſal Church* [he means General Councils] *are in all reaſon, without diſputing, to be received as Apoſtolical Truths, that the Holy Ghoſt ſpeaking to us by the Governors of the Chriſtian Churches, Chriſt's Succeſſors, may receive all uniform ſubmiſſion from us*, ſuits not with the Proteſtant Principles often formerly mentioned. † For thus (if I rightly underſtand him) all the definitions of General Councils, and of the Chriſtian Governors in all ages, as theſe being ſtill Chriſt's Succeſſors, are to be without diſputing, embraced as truths Apoſtolical.

See before §. 26.

§. 40. If the words of the fourth *Canon* of the *Engliſh Synod* 1640. ſignifie any more, than this; That any perſon *convicted* of Socinianiſm (*i. e.* by publiſhing his opinion) ſhall, upon ſuch conviction, be excommunicated; and if it be underſtood adequate to this, *Qui non crediderit filium eſſe ὁμοούσιον Deo Patri, Anathema ſit*, and, that the Church of *England*, for allowing her Communion, is not content with *ſilence* in reſpect of Socinianiſm, but obligeth men alſo to *aſſent* to the contrary; then, I ſee not upon what good grounds ſuch exclamation is made againſt the like Anathema's or exactions of aſſent required by that of *Trent*, or other late Councils, or by *Pius* his Bull. If it be ſaid here, the reaſon of ſuch faulting them is, becauſe theſe require aſſent, not being lawful *General Councils*, ſuch reaſon will not paſs; 1ſt. Becauſe, neither the Engliſh Synod, exacting aſſent in this point, is a General Council. 2ly. Becauſe, it is the Proteſtant tenent,

tenent, that neither may lawful General Councils require *assent* to all their Definitions. Or, if it be affirmed (either of *General* or *Provincial* Councils) that they may require assent under Anathema to some of their decrees; *viz.* Those evidently true, and divine Revelations; such as *Consubstantiality* is; but may not to others; *viz.* Those not manifested by them to be such; then, before we can censure any Council for its Anathema's, or its requiring of assent, we must know, whether the point, to which assent is required, is, or is not, evident divine Revelation. And then, by whom, or how, shall this thing touching the evidence of the Divine Revelation be judged or decided? for those that judge this, whoever they be, do sit now upon the trial of the rightness, or mistake of the judgment of a General Council: Or when, think we, will those who judge this (*i. e.* every person for himself) agree in their sentence? Again, If on the other side, the *former Church* in her language, *Si quis non crediderit, &c. Anathema sit*, be affirmed (to which purpose the fore-mentioned Axioms are urged by you) to mean nothing more, than, *Si quis Hæresin suam palam profiteatur, & hujus professionis convictus fuerit, Anathema sit*, Thus the Protestants former quarrel with her passing such *Anathema's* will be concluded causeless and unjust. But indeed, though, (according to the former sentences,) her Anathema is not extended to the internal act of holding such an opinion, if wholly concealed, so far as to render such person for it to stand *excommunicated*, and lie actually under this censure of the Church, because hitherto no contempt of her authority appears, nor is any dammage inferred to any other member of her Society thereby? Yet her *Anathema* also extends, even to the internal act, or tenet, after the Church's contrary definition known (which tenet also then is not held without a disobedience, and contempt of her authority) so far, as to render the delinquent therein guilty of a very great *mortal sin*; and so at the same time internally cut off from being a true member of *Christ's Body*; though externally he is not as yet so cut off. And the Casuists further state him *ipso facto* to be excommunicated, before, and without conviction, if externally he doth, or speaketh any thing, whereby he is convincible; and not if there be any thing *proved* against him, but if any thing at least *provable*; and such a one, upon this, to be obliged in Con-

Conscience, not only to confess his heretical opinion, for his being absolved from *mortal sin*; but also to seek a release from excommunication incurred, for his re-enjoying the Church's Communion. Thus you see a rigor in this Church towards what it once accounted *Heresie* much different from the more mild Spirit, and moderate temper of the *Reformed*.

§. 41. To conclude. For the enjoying the *Protestant* Communion, I conceive that, as to any necessary approbation of her Doctrins, it is sufficient for me to hold with Mr. *Chillingworth* (as I do †)——*That the Doctrin of Protestants, though not that, of all of them, absolutely true, yet it is free from all impiety, and from all Error destructive to Salvation, or in it self damnable.* And †——*whatsoever hath been held necessary to Salvation by the consent of Protestants, or even of the Church of* England, [which indeed hath given no certain Catalogue at all of such *necessaries*], *that, against the Socinians, and all others whatsoever, I do verily believe, and embrace*——And (which is still the same) †—*I am perswaded, that the constant doctrin of the Church of* England, *is so pure and Orthodox, that whosoever believes it, and lives according to it, undoubtedly he shall be saved.* [For if all truths necessary to Salvation be held in it, then, so, is no error, opposite or destructive to Salvation, held by it; and so, living according to the truths it holds, I may be saved.] Again †—*I believe that there is no error in it, which may necessitate, or warrant any man to disturb the peace, or renounce the Communion of it,* [For, though I believe *Antisocinianism*, an error; Yet if I hold it not such, as that for it any man may disturb the peace, or ought to renounce the Communion of the Church, I may profess all this, and yet hold Socinianism.] Lastly as he, ‖ so I;——*Propose me any thing out of the Bible, seem it never so incomprehensible, I will subscribe it with hand and heart. In other things* [that I think not contained in this Book] *I will take no mans liberty of judgment from him, neither shall any man take mine from me; for I am fully assured, that God doth not, and therefore that men ought not to require any more of any man than this; To believe the Scripture to be Gods Word, to endeavour to find the true sense of it; and to live according to it. Without pertinacy I can be no Heretick; And*†, *endeavouring to find the true sense of Scripture, I cannot but hold my error without pertinacy, and be ready to forsake it, when a more true,*

† *Chillingw. Pref.* §. 39.

† *Ib.* §. 28.

‡ *Ib.* §. 29.

‡ *Ibid.*

‖ *Chillingw. p.* 376.

† *Ib.* §. 57.

true, and a more probable ſenſe ſhall appear unto me.——And then, all neceſſary truth being plainly ſet down in Scripture, I am certain by believing Scripture to believe all neceſſary truth; and in doing ſo, my life being anſwerable to my Faith, how is it poſſible I ſhould fail of Salvation? Thus Mr. *Chillingworth* ſpeaks perfectly my ſenſe.

Prot. I ſee no other cure for you; but that you learn *humility* and *mortification* of your *Underſtanding* (in which lies the moſt ſubtle and perilous of all *Prides*): And, It will reduce you to *Obedience*: and this to *Truth*. Then, with all the Church of God, you may give glory to *God the only begotten Son*, and *the Holy Ghoſt*, *coeſſential with God the Father*. To which *Trinity* in *Unity*, as it hath been from the beginning, and is now, ſo ſhall all Honour and Glory be given throughout all future ages. *Amen.*

FINIS.

ERRATA.

PAge 19. lin. 18. read *Emperor*. p. 28. l. 1. dele [*See more Proteſtants cited to this purpoſe, Diſc.* 3. §. 19.] pag. 31. l. 7. r. *there by.*